LEGACIES *in* STEEL

Personalized and Historical German Military Edged Weapons 1800-1990



Hermann Hampe &
Rick Dauzat

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CASEMATE
Philadelphia & Oxford

Published in the United States of America and Great Britain in 2019 by
CASEMATE PUBLISHERS
1950 Lawrence Road, Havertown, PA 19083, USA
and
The Old Music Hall, 106–108 Cowley Road, Oxford OX4 1JE, UK

© Hermann Hampe and Rick Dauzat 2019

Print Edition: ISBN 978-1-61200-777-9
Digital Edition: ISBN 978-1-61200-778-6

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Printed in Turkey by MegaPrint

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"Christianity—and that is its greatest merit—has somewhat mitigated that brutal German love of war, but it could not destroy it. Should that subduing talisman, the cross, be shattered, the frenzied madness of the ancient warriors, that insane Berserk rage of which Nordic bards have spoken and sung so often, will once more burst into flame.

The old stone gods will then rise from long ruins and rub the dust of a thousand years from their eyes, and Thor will leap to life with his giant hammer and smash the Gothic cathedrals.

Do not smile at my advice—the advice of a dreamer who warns you against Kantians, Fichteans, and philosophers of nature. Do not smile at the visionary who anticipates the same revolution in the realm of the visible as has taken place in the spiritual. Thought precedes action as lightning precedes thunder. German thunder comes rolling somewhat slowly, but its crash will be unlike anything before in the history of the world.

At that uproar the eagles of the air will drop dead, and lions in farthest Africa will draw in their tails and slink away. A play will be performed in Germany which will make the French Revolution look like an innocent idyll."

—Heinrich Heine 1830


Hans s/L. Bobby. 7.2.03.

Preface

This work is focused on historical edged weapons of the German military from 1800 to 1990. These examples have been carefully selected from some of the most important private collections in the world as well as German museums of distinction. Through the photographic lens, details of these elegant and beautiful objects are featured. Moreover, this effort is the largest compendium of personalized edged weapons published to date.

Where possible, the careers and courageous exploits of the former owners within the context of contemporary world events are highlighted. An appreciation of this historical context transforms what is a beautiful and sublimely crafted artifact in its own right, into a portal to the past by putting a face to an otherwise inanimate object. Many of these edged weapons belonged to nobility, aristocrats, high-ranking military personnel as well as brave soldiers and seamen. Their faithful contributions and valor are recorded here for posterity, to be passed on to future generations, for many of them made the ultimate sacrifice in the service of their country.

Since medieval times, edged weapons have been held in reverence as symbols of authority, power and justice. This romantic aura has resulted in many blades taking on legendary proportions such as such as King Arthur's Excalibur or El Cid's Tizona, which were thought to yield almost mystical powers. Even today, the edged weapon remains a symbolic tie to ancient heraldic nobility and chivalry. Through the passage of time, swords and daggers came to not simply be a personal weapon but rather to represent the person, inseparable from the owner's honor, integrity and existential relevance. Consequently, it is not uncommon to observe weapons with blades broken by their owners upon surrender of his weapon to the victor. This final act of defiance stemmed from a deep-seated desire to preserve their honor.

Swords and daggers, although having long outlived their utility as an effective fighting weapon, maintained their popularity in Western Europe as uniform regalia reaching its zenith in the 19th century through to the mid-20th century. They were carried with great pride as a symbol of authority, organizational and social distinction, achievement and most importantly, honor. These weapons were produced with great skill and at high cost during the heyday of German edged weapon production. Complex and time consuming to produce, these weapons required extensive handwork by many specialized and highly skilled artisans. The use of precious metals and ivory was common. Elaborate hand engraving and chiseling was extensively employed. Blades were fabricated of the highest-quality Solingen steel. Folded-steel Damascus blades were also painstakingly and selectively produced. These required great skill and talent passed down from father to son through each generation by a celebrated few Damascus smiths of great distinction and national renown. Many examples are unique and border on singular works of art.

The authors are dedicated to preserving not only these beautiful historical artifacts but equally important, the legacy and honor of each of the original owners.

Lastly, only through the photographic lens is it possible to appreciate the beauty and unique qualities of these edged weapons.

We would like to thank Vaughan Burrows (Great Britain); Thomas Gohlke (Germany); Roman Korinth (Norway); Oleg Ryskin (Germany); Sven Schiffelbein (Germany; and Marineschule der Bundeswehr).

Acknowledgements

Dr. Friedrich-Wilhelm Ast
Vaughan Burrows
Axel Dörrenbach
Thomas Gohlke
Gunnar Herbst
Thomas M. Johnson
Dr. Alexander Jordan
Roman Korinth
Markus Menze
Harry Redner, http://www.luftschiffharry.de/
Oleg Ryskin
Joachim Scherneck-Czech
Sven Schiffelbein
Olga Shirnina (Coloration Artwork)
Jean Varret
Helmut Weitze
Thomas T. Wittmann
www.europeana.eu
Luftwaffenmuseum of the Bundeswehr, Gatow, Germany
Military History Research Institute of the Bundeswehr, Potsdam, Germany
Bundeswehr Military History Museum of Dresden, Germany
Nick McCully USMC (retired), USA
Luftwaffenmuseum Laatzen, Germany
Bundesarchiv Freiburg and Berlin, Germany

The authors would also like to acknowledge the late Victor (Vic) Diehl, whose unselfish sharing of his vast experience was an inspiration. His dedication to the collecting and researching of exquisite Imperial German edged weapons is legendary. It is hoped in some small way we have honored his timeless work with this book.





Authors' Dedication

This book would not have been possible without the unwavering support and endless encouragement of our loved ones. We are grateful for their patience in allowing us to pursue our passion.

Hermann dedicates this book to
Karin, Viktoria and Leonhard

Rick dedicates this book to Rosalind

Prussian Naval Daggers




Amazone Hirschfänger





Amazone Hirschfänger with Dagger-Like Blade

On January 4, 1844 the Prussian King Friedrich Wilhelm IV authorized a dagger-like Hirschfänger with Portepée for wear by the officers of the ship *Amazone*.

The pictured weapon is the only example known to exist that matches exactly this description. It is indeed a Hirschfänger by construction and size and also a kind of dagger because both edges of the blade are sharpened, something not found on any military Hirschfänger of the time period. More importantly, its distinct inventory stamp allows it to be clearly identified. "FW59" stands for "Prussian King Friedrich Wilhelm IV, 1859." Although the brother of Friedrich Wilhelm IV, Wilhelm I was at this time acting as regent, the initials of the still living and ruling King were still in use. The crowned "M" shows that the weapon passed the Navy weapon inspection. The "5" means weapon number 5. It is interesting that this sidearm was accepted and issued after the introduction of the 1848 dagger.

This sidearm shows heavy wear but is one of the most important early German naval edged weapons in existence and a true museum piece.





Leutnant zur See 1st class Hermann, Commander of the Amazone

Kriegscorvette Amazone

The sailing corvette *Amazone* was built in 1843 in Grabow near Stettin. She was to be a training ship for the Navigation Training School in Danzig. Although a Prussian marine force did not yet exist, she was armed and sailed as a flagged fully-rigged warship. She was originally armed with two 24-pound canons of English origin and twelve short 18-pounders from Sweden. In 1849 she carried four 24-pound canons and eight short 18-pounders. Her figurehead was the head of "The Fighting Amazone," a statue designed by August Kiss in 1842. It can be seen in the Alten Museum in Berlin.

During 1844 and 1845 the *Amazone* sailed the Mediterranean Sea under the command of the Director of the Navigation Training School. On the first journey she was visited in Piraeus by Otto Friedrich Ludwig von Wittelsbach, King of Greece. A further notable occasion was in 1846 when the sacred remains of Prince Friedrich Karl Heinrich of Prussia, who had died in Rome, were repatriated from Civitavecchia to his native homeland. For this special event the hull of the ship was painted black. Helmuth Karl Bernhard Graf von Moltke (Count or Earl Moltke), who was later to become general field marshal, had been aide-de-camp to the prince when he was living in Rome.

In 1847 the *Amazone* sailed to New York. During the Schleswig-Holstein Wars (1848–1851) against the Kingdom of Denmark, she was under the command of the Danzig fortress. That year a naval department was established. *Amazone* was the first vessel commissioned as a warship and at the time was the only one, apart from gunboats, with a helm.

In 1852 the *Amazone* departed with the corvette ships *Gefion* and *Mercur* as a squadron on a journey to South America. From 1884 onwards the *Amazone* undertook operations primarily in the Baltic Sea area as well as around England, Sweden and Norway. In June 1861 she was temporarily the flagship of Prince Adalbert in squadron with *Hela* and six steam gunboats.

On October 30, 1861 at 07:45, *Amazone* departed for Portugal on a training mission. She subsequently was caught in a hurricane off the Dutch coast on November 14, 1861 and presumably sank. The estimate of victims varies between 107 (6 officers, 1 deck officer, 4 non-commissioned officers, 41 seamen, 19 midshipmen and sea cadets of the crews of the years 1855, 1858 and 1859 as well as 36 ship's boys) and 143 (Lieutenant Hermann, First Officer Freiherr von Dobeneck, 4 officers, 18 sea cadets and 120 crewmen).

A few names are known to the authors:

- Leutnant zur See 1st class Hermann, Commander of the *Amazone*
- Leutnant zur See 2nd class Freiherr Hans Victor von Dobeneck, Pietsch, von Negelein and von Ising
- Shipsdoctor Dr. Engelbrecht
- Boatswain Metzlaff

A memorial in the form of an obelisk (made from marble from Silesia) was erected in the Invaliden Park, Berlin in 1863, in honor of the dead. The monument, which Theodor Fontane describes in his novel *Stine*, was destroyed in 1951 following a resolution of the East German State leadership.



Amazone Officers



Memorial to the brave sailors of the Amazone

Curved Prussian Navy Dagger









The Paul Barandon Curved Naval Dagger

The steam-ship *Prussian Eagle* was built by Ditchburn and Marl in Blackwell/London and launched in 1847 for the Prussian Ministry of Post and sailed the route Gdansk–St. Petersburg.

Due to the outbreak of the German–Danish war in April 1848, known as the First Schleswig War, the ship, its captain Paul Barandon and a portion of the crew were transferred into service of the Prussian War Ministry.

Although Paul Barandon was a civilian captain without an official military position in the Prussian Navy, he oversaw the transformation of the *Prussian Eagle* from a civilian steamer to a fully equipped war ship.

On March 29, 1849, Barandon officially joined the Navy and was promoted on March 31, 1849 to Lieutenant 1st Class. Conforming to the rank of a captain in the Prussian Army, he commanded the newly fitted battleship *Prussian Eagle*.

On June 27, 1849, Lieutenant 1st Class Paul Barandon and his men had their baptism of fire during a battle with the Danish Brig *St. Croix* off the coast near the Prussian village of Brüsterort. Barandon's men fought with just four guns, two 25-pound and two 32-pound short cannons, whereas the *St. Croix* was able to muster 16 guns.

The naval battle lasted over five hours and was only stopped by Barandon as another Danish warship rushed by to support *St. Croix*.

Prussian Eagle, Paul Barandon and his courageous crew fought the first naval battle of the



Prussian Navy after the Napoleonic Wars marking the beginning of the development of German sea power and the German Imperial Navy during the reign of Kaiser Wilhelm II.

We can still find Paul Barandon in the 1850 rank-list as Lieutenant 1st Class. He resigned on April 8, 1851 with the rank of a Oberleutnant zur See. It is highly likely that he served as a civilian captain afterwards.

An advertisement of the Baltic Lloyd Company from fall 1870 shows that Paul Barandon commanded the newly built steamship *Humboldt*. The *Humboldt* operated the line Stettin–New York and carried mostly German emigrants to the USA.

Curved daggers came in fashion in the mid-19th century as a recourse to curved Islamic swords from the Near East. His curved naval dagger is one of the most important historical German edged weapons and was accordingly prominently shown in the official exhibition of the federal state Schleswig-Holstein *AufBruch & BürgerKrieg Schleswig-Holstein 1848–1851*—"Awakening & Civil War Schleswig-Holstein 1848–1851" in 2012.


Barandon





Prussian Eagle







Figurehead from the prow of Prussian Eagle

Prussian Naval Officer Dagger of Leutnant Heiner Lütjens







Prussian Naval Officer Dagger of Leutnant Heiner Lütjens

Elected on May 1, 1848, the Frankfurt Parliament was the first freely elected parliament for all of Germany. The session was held from May 18, 1848 to May 31, 1849 in the Paulskirche at Frankfurt am Main. Its existence was both part of and the result of the "March Revolution" in the states of the German Confederation.

After extended controversial debate, the assembly produced the so-called "Frankfurt Constitution" which proclaimed a German Empire based on the principles of parliamentary democracy. This constitution fulfilled the main demands of the liberal and nationalist movements of the Vormärz and provided a foundation of basic rights. The parliament also proposed a constitutional monarchy headed by a hereditary emperor (Kaiser).

The Prussian King Friedrich Wilhelm IV refused to accept the proclamation of emperor when it was offered to him on the grounds that such a constitution and such an offer were an abridgment of the rights of the princes of the individual German states. In the 20th century however, major elements of the Frankfurt constitution became models for the Weimar Constitution of 1919 and the Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany of 1949. One of the first military steps of the parliament was the founding of a German Navy, the Reichsmarine, on June 14, 1848.

The minister of naval affairs, Generallieutenant Jochmus, on October 16, 1849 formally authorized the wearing of a curved dagger by naval officers and cadets. Officers of the Schleswig-Holstein navy, which formed the core of the German Reichsmarine, often wore curved daggers. It is also likely that another reason for authorizing the carrying of a curved dagger was that the Prussian Navy—which now was not a part of the Reichsmarine—carried a cruciform-style dagger previously authorized for wear in 1848.

Because Heiner Lütjens was not discovered until recently in the very few remaining and incomplete Prussian records, it is likely that he was not a Prussian officer serving on the



Reichsmarine ship *Amazone*, as engraved on the scabbard. It is also quite unlikely that Lütjens served on the French frigate *Amazone* (1821–1841). However, even without irrefutable personal attribution, the weapon is a very rare and beautiful artifact from a short period when Germany was united under democratic rules prior to the formal unification of Germany in January 1871 into a politically and administratively integrated nation state. The national flag colors—black, red, and gold—of the German Bundesrepublik of today date back to this period of the democratic spring.



Officer of the Schleswig Holstein Navy


Jr Lt Emmy Lilljenc
a Amazone









Prussian Naval Officer Dagger of 1848







Prussian Naval Officer Dagger of 1848

This is an interesting German naval dagger from around 1850. It is one of the very few in the world from this period with an etched blade. Even though unnamed, this artifact it is shown because of its extreme rarity and the "grandezza" of the workmanship of the fittings and scabbard.

What we see is a reed-bundle pommel with meandering waves. Reed-bundles were used in ancient times as anchors, signals, and life buoys. Remarkable are the sophisticated details of the handwork, especially on the scabbard and the artistically executed reed-bundle pommel. Very few naval daggers of this period exhibit such detail and quality.

This dagger pattern was authorized on April 27, 1849 for the newly reorganized Prussian Navy. Key characteristics of this pattern are the baluster-shaped ivory grip as well as the V-shaped scabbard end.





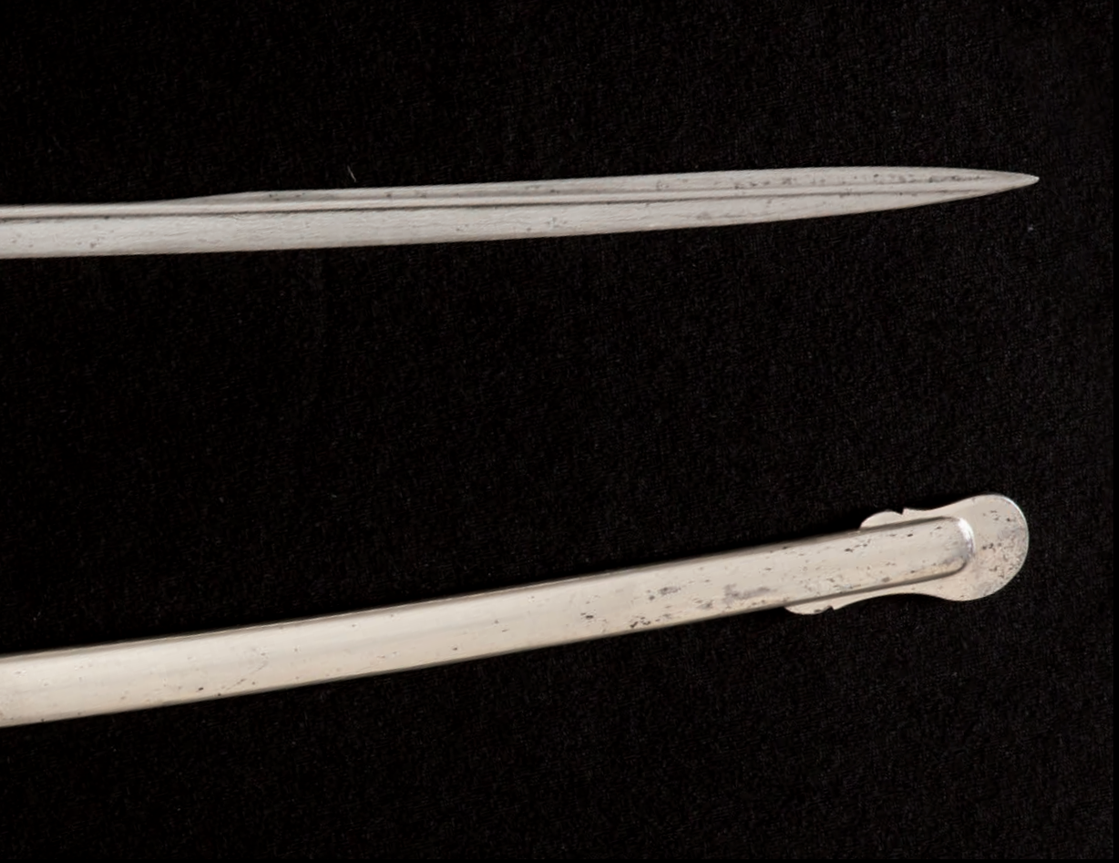
Imperial German Army Sabers, Degens and Pallasches



Cavalry Officer Saber of Major Erich Blankenhorn









Saber of Major Erich Blankenhorn

Erich Blankenhorn (born March 14, 1878 in Karlsruhe, Germany; died January 15, 1963) joined a dragoons regiment after leaving high school. In 1910 he was attached to the 2nd Hussars Regiments No. 9. From 1912 to 1914 he served on the General Staff in Berlin. In 1913 he was promoted to Rittmeister and in 1914 to the rank of Hauptmann. He served on the General Staff of the 4th Cavalry Division, Eleventh Army, and Army Group Mackensen during the first two years of the Great War.

In 1916 he became the first General-Staff officer of the 35th Reserve Division. Further positions followed in the Generals-Staffs of the First Army, the 240th Division and the 236th Division. In 1918, then a Major, he commanded the German Alpine-Corps.

After the Armistice he came to Munich and back to Freiburg. There he became head of the General Staff of Baden in Karlsruhe in 1919 for demobilization duties. In 1920, he was dismissed from active duty. From 1920 to 1933 he served as Colonel and head of the Baden police. In 1933, he was fired by the Nazis because of his opposition to the regime. From 1934 he worked as the director of the newly founded Baden Army Museum, which later became the Wehrtechnische Studiensammlung Raststatt. After the Second World War he was responsible for the reconstruction and management of the Badisches Historisches Museum in the New Baden-Baden Palace. Blankenhorn died in 1963 in Badenweiler.

This remarkable weapon is an infantry Lionhead saber with a hand-chiseled hilt and a forged Damascus blade highlighted with etched and gilt decor. The crossed swords on the langet indicates that this sword is for a cavalry officer. Blankenhorn's coat of arms is engraved on the reverse langet.


EISENHAUER





Cavalry Officer Saber of Rittmeister von Bohlen




Beim scheidenden Kameraden
das Offizierhorn des 2. Badischen Dragoner-Regiments





Phot. Radstedter.

Ein schwieriges Reiterkunststück:
Rittmeister von Bohlen und Halbach
(Bad. Leibdragonerregiment 20)
beim Herabklettern eines Steilhanges (10—12 m hoch).


Dem scheidenden Rittmeis
das Offizierkorps des 2. Badisch



Cavalry Officer Saber of Gustav Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach

Gustav Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach (1870–1950) was a leading German industrialist and chairman of the Reich Association of Industry. His position accorded him vast economic benefits. As a result of Krupp's influential standing, his firm was offered facilities in Eastern Europe and made extensive use of forced labor during the Second World War. He was deemed too ill to stand trial at the International Military Tribunal and at the subsequent Krupp Trial held in Nuremberg in 1947. Krupp died in 1950, having lived the remainder of his life in freedom.

Gustav von Bohlen und Halbach was the descendant of two prominent German-American families. His father was ennobled by the Grand Duke of Baden when his family immigrated back to Germany.

At the age of eighteen, he volunteered for the 2nd Baden Dragoons, and then proceeded to study law at Lausanne, Strasbourg, and Heidelberg. With a law degree, he became a diplomat like his father and in this capacity served in Washington, Peking, and the Vatican.

In October 1906, Kaiser Wilhelm arranged for him to marry Bertha Krupp, the heir of the industrial conglomerate. The Kaiser also made him Gustav Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach in order to legitimize his takeover of the company. Eldest male heirs of all future generations were also bestowed this honor.

This cavalry saber was a farewell gift from his officer comrades when von Bohlen und Halbach left the unit.





Cuirassier Officer Pallasch of General Daniel von Schoeler


Zur Erinnerung an Sein 25 Jähriges Commando
1848.

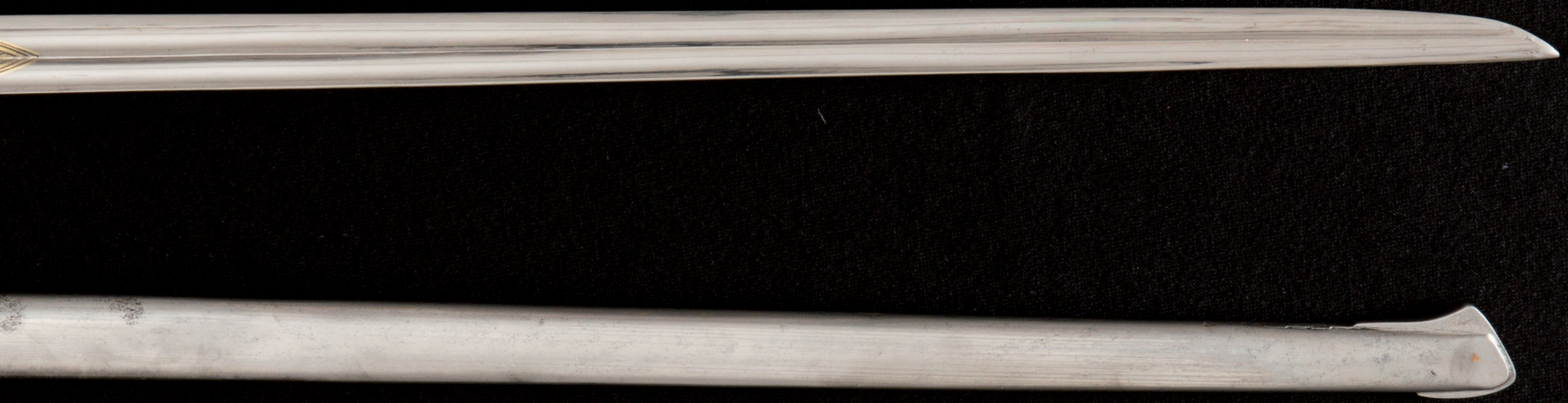
Cuirassier Officer Pallasch of General Daniel von Schoeler

Daniel von Schoeler was born in Wesel March 13, 1800 and died June 8, 1879. He was a Prussian Generalleutnant.

He entered the Prussian 4. Cuirassier Regiment in 1816 and promoted to Leutnant in 1818. In 1856 he was promoted to the rank of a Oberst and became commander of the 4th Cuirassier Regiment.

The Pallasch was presented to von Schoeler in 1848 from the commander of the 7th Cuirassier Regiment, the Grand Duke Michael Pavlovich of Russia, to honor von Schoeler's 25-year service anniversary.

This particular piece is an expensive gift to honor a high-ranking officer for his long service. It was custom ordered with deluxe features such as the Damascus blade with etched dedication highlighted in gold. The Pallasch is a style of straight sword and are often quite utilitarian when designed to be used as a weapon. This one was purely for show and formal wear.



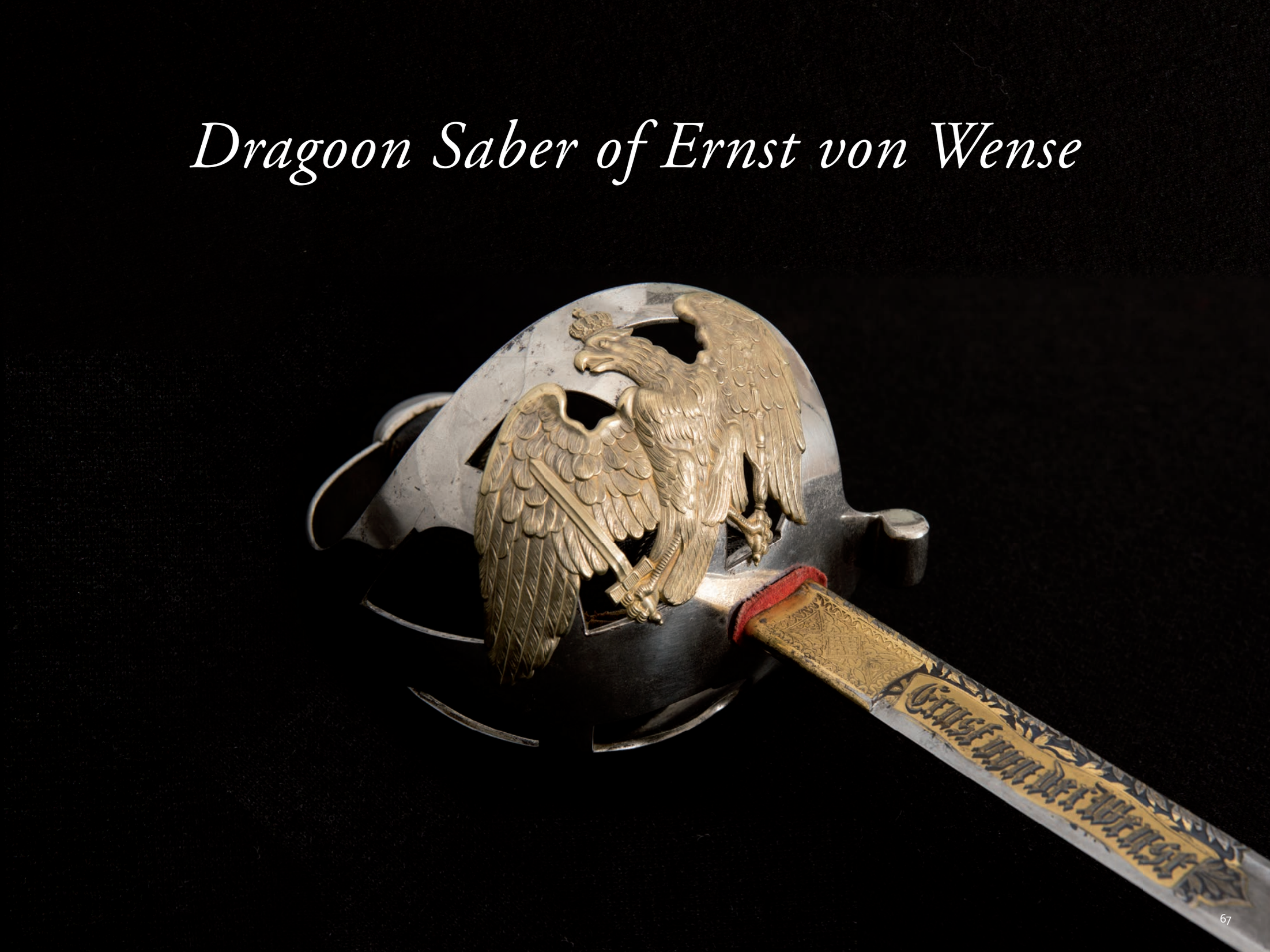

Vom Chef des 7ten Kürassier Regiments.
1823.




Zur Erinnerung an Sein 25 Jähriges Commando.
1848.

Vom Chef des 7ten Kürassier Regiments.
1823.

Dragoon Saber of Ernst von Wense




Gehe nicht weg ohne mich



Guard Dragoon Saber of Ernst von Wense

This Guard Dragoon Saber was most likely worn by Major Ernst von Wense of the Dragoon Regiment No.1 "Prinz Albrecht von Preußen". The saber guard shows the large Prussian heraldic eagle. The blade is made from folded steel in the ribbon Damascus pattern and has been gilded with the Imperial Eagle and the name "Ernst von der Wense." This is a specially ordered and privately purchased example with deluxe features.


Ernst von der Wense
EISENHAUER
ECHT DAMAST
Ernst von der Wense

Fusilier Officer Saber of Erich Blankenhorn




Gisbert Freiherr vom Ende
Erich Blankenhorn
zur dauernder Erinnerung



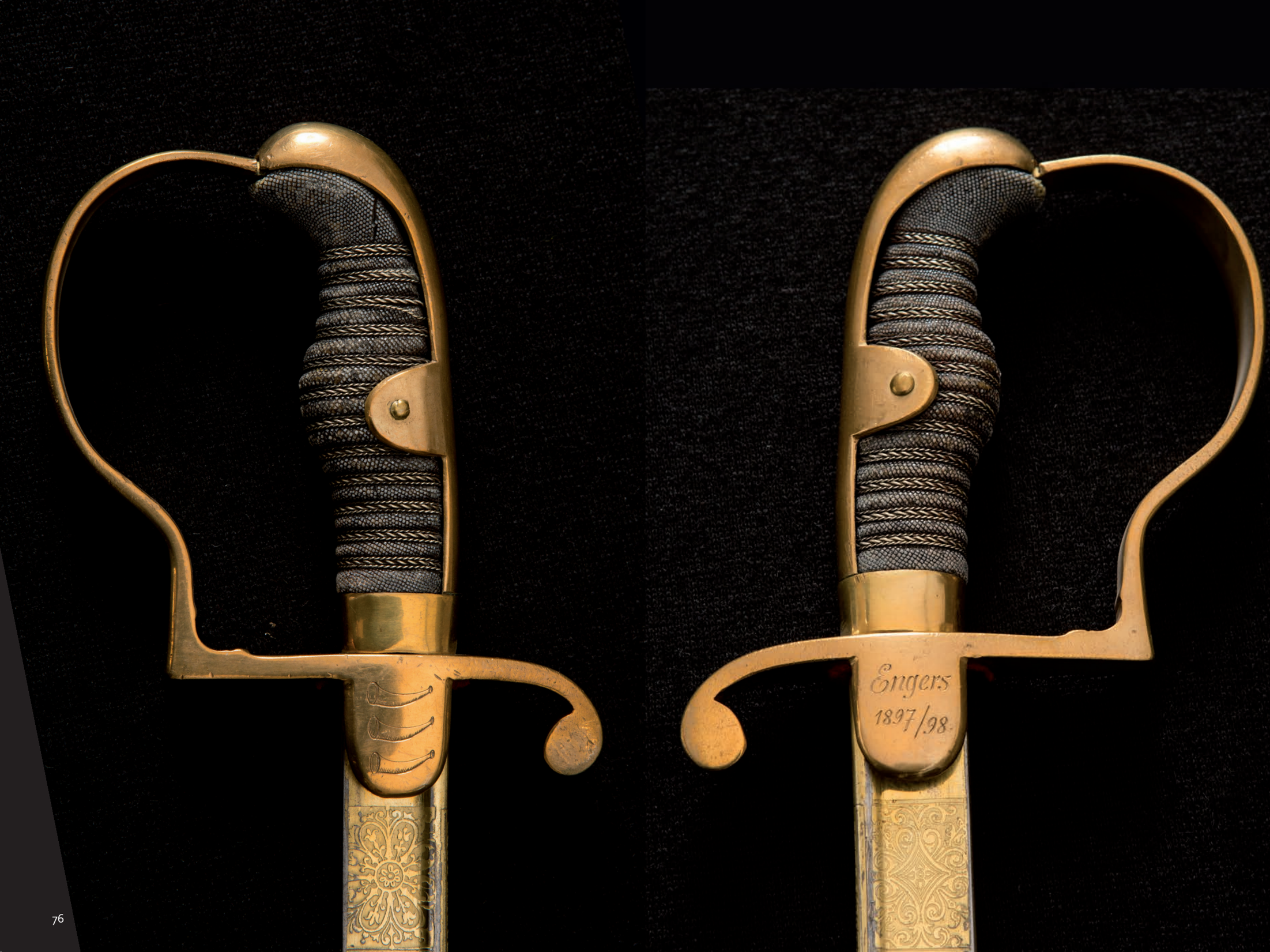
Fusilier Officer Saber of Erich Blankenhorn

Erich Blankenhorn was born March 14, 1878 in Karlsruhe. He was a German officer in the Baden Life-Dragoon Regiment and took part in the First World War.

After receiving his high school diploma, he joined the 1st Baden Life-Dragoon as a One-Year-Volunteer in 1896. In 1897 and 1898 he served as a Cadet in the 3rd Baden Life-Dragoon-Regiment Nr. 22 "Prinz Karl" in the Cadet school at Castle Engers together with the Baron Gisberth von Esebeck who presented this weapon to him as a gift of friendship. This was a common practice among the officers of the officer corps of the time as they tended to be well-heeled aristocrats. Blankenhorn's family crest—with three horns—adorns the cross guard of this interesting artifact. One year later he was promoted to Leutnant.




Enfield
1897/98


Engers
1897/98


Gisbert Freiherr von Esebeck
v. L. Erich Blankenhorn
zur dauernder Erinnerung

Infantry Officer Saber of General von Ranzow







Infantry Officer Saber of General Heinrich von Ranzow

Heinrich Friedrich Wilhelm Ernst Graf von Ranzow served as commanding officer in the Oldenburg-Hanseatische-Brigade. Founded in 1834, it was an infantry unit established by the Hanseatic cities and the Duchy of Oldenburg with 5,019 soldiers.

His unit served with the 10. Bundesarmeecorps in the 1840s. Therefore, he received his presentation saber by the King of Hanover, Georg V, the last King of Hanover before his kingdom was occupied by Prussian troops in 1866. Von Ranzow died January 27, 1860.

The maker of this sword was a well-known company from the former Kingdom of Hanover. The company Bernstorff & Eichwede was a monument foundry in Hanover whose history goes back to the 18th century and whose products can still be found today, for example as monuments in Hanover and Berlin.

The Hof-Bronzefabrik und Kunstgießerei C. Bernstorff & Eichwede was between Eichstrasse and Bernstrasse in today's Hanover district of Oststadt.

Their best-known monument was the mounted statue of King Ernst August of Hanover in front of the main station where people still meet today "under the horse's tail."


KÖNIG
GEORG
DEM
GROSSHERZOG
OLDENBURG
GISCHEN
GENERAL
MAJOR
VON RANZ


Berg
&
HANNOVER


KÖNIG
GEORG V.
DEM
GROSSHERZOGLICH
OLDENBUR=
GISCHEN
GENERAL=
MAJOR
VON RANZOW

Imperial Guard Infantry Officer Degen of General Roderich von Schoeler







Imperial Guard Infantry Officer Degen of General Roderich von Schoeler

Roderich Felix August von Schoeler was born August 3, 1862 in Trier and died on April 4, 1935.

Serving as the Imperial German Army's Intendant-General during the first half of the First World War, General von Schoeler also saw field duty as a divisional commander. During the final year of the war, he replaced Otto von Plüskow as commander of VIII Army Corps. It was for his leadership during this period that he was awarded with the Pour le Mérite in 1918.

Following the war, von Schoeler led his VIII Corps troops back to Koblenz where he remained in command for a few months. He thereafter was placed in charge of Group Command Nr. 2 in Kassel and retired from active duty at the brevet rank of General der Infanterie.

This degen was privately purchased by von Schoeler. The fine Damascus blade is adorned with his family crest and his personal cipher. The hilt is decorated with the Guard Star and the Order of the Wendish Crown as he was a knight of this order.


PER ASPERA AD ASTRA



Imperial Dragoon Saber





Presentation Baden Dragoon Saber

This elaborate basket hilt saber was likely presented by the officer corps of the 2nd Baden Dragoons, Regiment 21 to their commandant. It consists of a fine hand-forged Damascus blade in the "Band" or ribbon pattern. In gold gilt relief are the names of each of the 27 officers in the regiment who contributed to the commissioning of this custom saber. The hilt consists of a pierced nickel basket adorned with highly hand-chiseled scrollwork and is finished with a wire-wrapped ray skin grip.

This pattern saber is unique to Baden and Hesse cavalry units. The hilt design can be traced to a mid-19th century Austrian style.




Dem scheidenden Kameraden
das Offizierkorps


Werther
Gedenbert
Stuve
Bayard
Forst
Steiger
Keus
Fhr.
Marschall
Liebenstein
Fackler
Barkeim
Ihlee63
Meusing
Badischen
Dragoner-Regiments №21


Yeller 97
Grs. Wiser of
Gr. der Gots
Frey. Wagern
v. Orlof
Yeller 97
Grs. Wiser of
Gr. der Gots
Frey. Wagern
v. Orlof



Imperial Guard Officer Saber





Imperial Guard Officer Saber

This Prussian lion head saber pattern dates back centuries and remained an enduring favorite motif through the mid-20th century. This variation is often referred to as the "jawless" variety and retains the characteristic "P"-shaped knuckle bow protecting the ray skin grip.

While the owner of this example remains unknown, it is interesting that eight aristocratic officers are listed on the reverse langet. The most notable name is that of Karl Rudolf Gerd von Rundstedt. Von Rundstedt entered the Prussian Army in 1892 and served a long distinguished military career ending in March 1945. At the rank of Field Marshal, he served as commander of various Army Groups through some of the most infamous campaigns of the Second World War. He died in 1953.

The obverse langet features an applied Guard Star. The blade is Damascus folded steel and is etched with various military implements of war and a Greek warrior, all highlighted in gold. The nickel-plated, dual hanger ring scabbard is the type authorized for use prior to 1906.









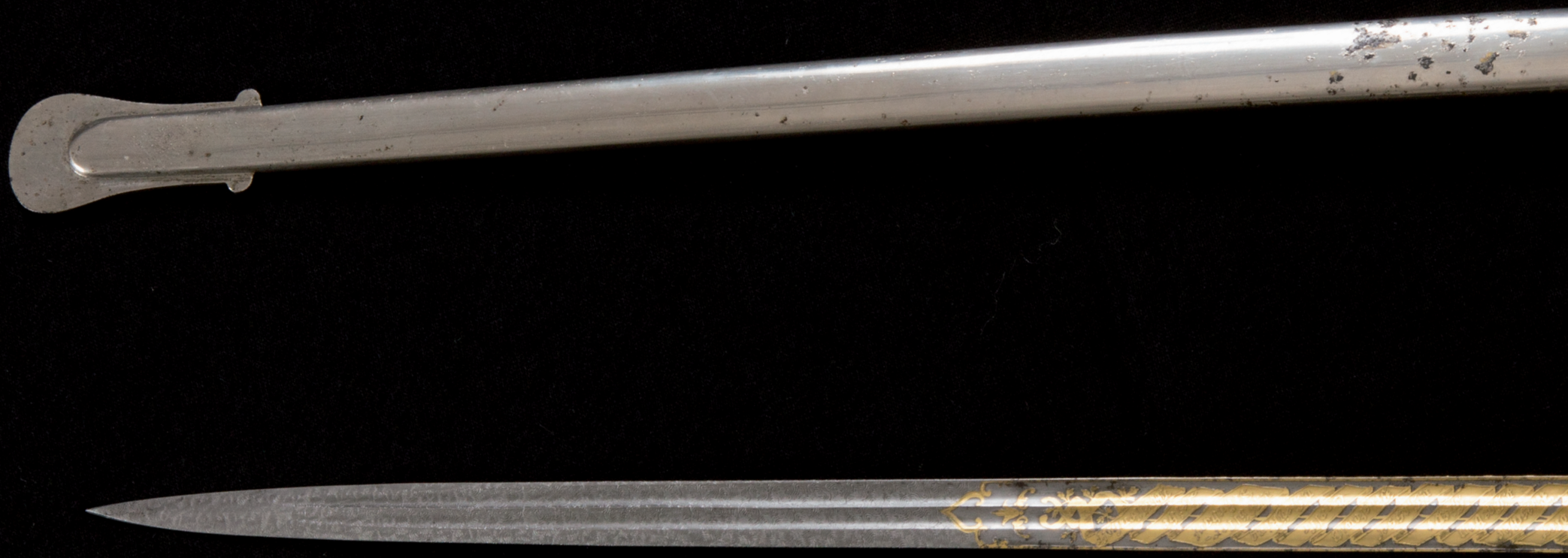


Infantry Guard Officer Pallasch of Hauptmann von Stosch











Infantry Guard Officer Pallasch of Hauptmann von Stosch

Georg Friedrich Karl Graf von Stosch was born June 11, 1866 in Hartau. He was a German administrative lawyer who studied at the Göttingen University.

He served in the 1st Foot Guard Regiment as Captain and later worked in Silesia for the Prussian Government.

Called into service when the Great War broke out, he fought at the battle of Warsaw-Ivangorod and was killed October 10, 1914 while advancing with his unit against retreating Russian troops.



H.C. BRUNEN
SOLINGEN


Dem scheidenden
Hauptmann von
Das Offizier-Corps


Kameraden
Skosch 1892-1896
I Seebataillons
Dem scheidenden Kameraden
Hauptmann von Skosch 1892
Das Offizier-Corps des I Seebataillons

Infantry Officer Saber of Prince Ludwig Wilhelm von Baden





Infantry Officer Saber of Prince Ludwig Wilhelm von Baden

Ludwig Wilhelm Karl Friedrich Berthold von Baden was born June 12, 1865. He was the youngest son of Frederick I, Grand Duke of Baden and his wife, Princess Louise of Prussia. As a royal member of the ruling house he was afforded the honorary titles and recognition commensurate with his position. He became a member of the Regiment of the Guards on July 9, 1883. His sword is a typical infantry officer lion head sword. An enameled guard star is located on the obverse langet.

As a young man he attended university in Freiburg and as was common among aristocracy and high society, was a member of the Das Corps Suevia Heidelberg, a prestigious student union. These student unions were common during this time and promoted character building, honor and the development of social skills.

Fencing was a traditional athletic pastime among the student elite. Scaling (fencing battle) between two male members of different student unions was highly regulated. Participants used sharp weapons known as Mensurschlägers or student fencing swords. While duels make for romantic stories, student union-sanctioned fencing by this time required the use of complete protective equipment. Injuries were largely limited to small cuts only and the resulting scars often considered a badge of honor and rite of passage.

Prince Ludwig Wilhelm met his death prematurely on February 2, 1888. Official reports indicate he died of pneumonia. There are other reports that he actually died in a duel protecting the honor of his sister. The true cause of his death—at the tender age of 23 years—is lost to history.

His grieving parents interred his body in an elaborately carved white marble sarcophagus in the Sepulchral Chapel of the Grand Dukes of Baden. The chapel was commissioned by his parents upon his death and is situated on the edge of the Karlsruhe "Pheasant Gardens."







Prince Ludwig Wilhelm von Baden





Infantry Officer Degen of Duke Leopold von Hohenzollern




Seinem hohen Chef dem Fürsten Leopold von Hohenzollern
das Offizierkorps des Füsilier-Regiments Hohenzollern.


1805-1895



Infantry Officer Presentation Degen of Leopold, Prince of Hohenzollern

The officer corps of the Hohenzollern Fusilier Regiment presented this deluxe M89 pattern sword to Leopold, Prince of Hohenzollern. It was presented on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of his appointment as Chief of the regiment. He succeeded his father, Prince Karl Anton, in this position upon his father's death.

The sword is a specially commissioned piece consisting of a hand-forged Damascus steel blade. The etched blade has gilded highlights and a blued background to accentuate the detail. The silver wire-wrapped grip includes the cypher of Kaiser Wilhelm II and Guard Star device applied.

Prince Leopold was a General of the Infantry and Chief of the Hohenzollern Fusilier Regiments from July 5, 1885 until June 8, 1905. Fusilier was a largely honorary title given to elite infantry regiments.

When Queen Isabella II of Spain was overthrown in the Spanish Revolution of 1868, Leopold was offered the Spanish Crown. Napoleon III of France vehemently opposed his candidacy for fear that the installation of a Prussian king would effectively result in the surrounding of France by Prussian power and influence. To ease tensions, Leopold declined the offer. However, additional concessions demanded by France and diplomatic missteps on both sides strained relations. Subsequently, France declared war in July 1870. In a move totally unexpected by France, the southern members of the North German Confederation came to the aid of Prussia, and France was defeated in May 1871.

The German victory resulted in the unification of German states into the nation state it is today. The king of the Kingdom of Prussia, Wilhelm I, was crowned Kaiser of the German Empire at the Hall of Mirrors in Versailles.




Seinem hohen Chef dem Fü
das Offizierkorps des Füs
EISENHAUER
DAMAST STAHL

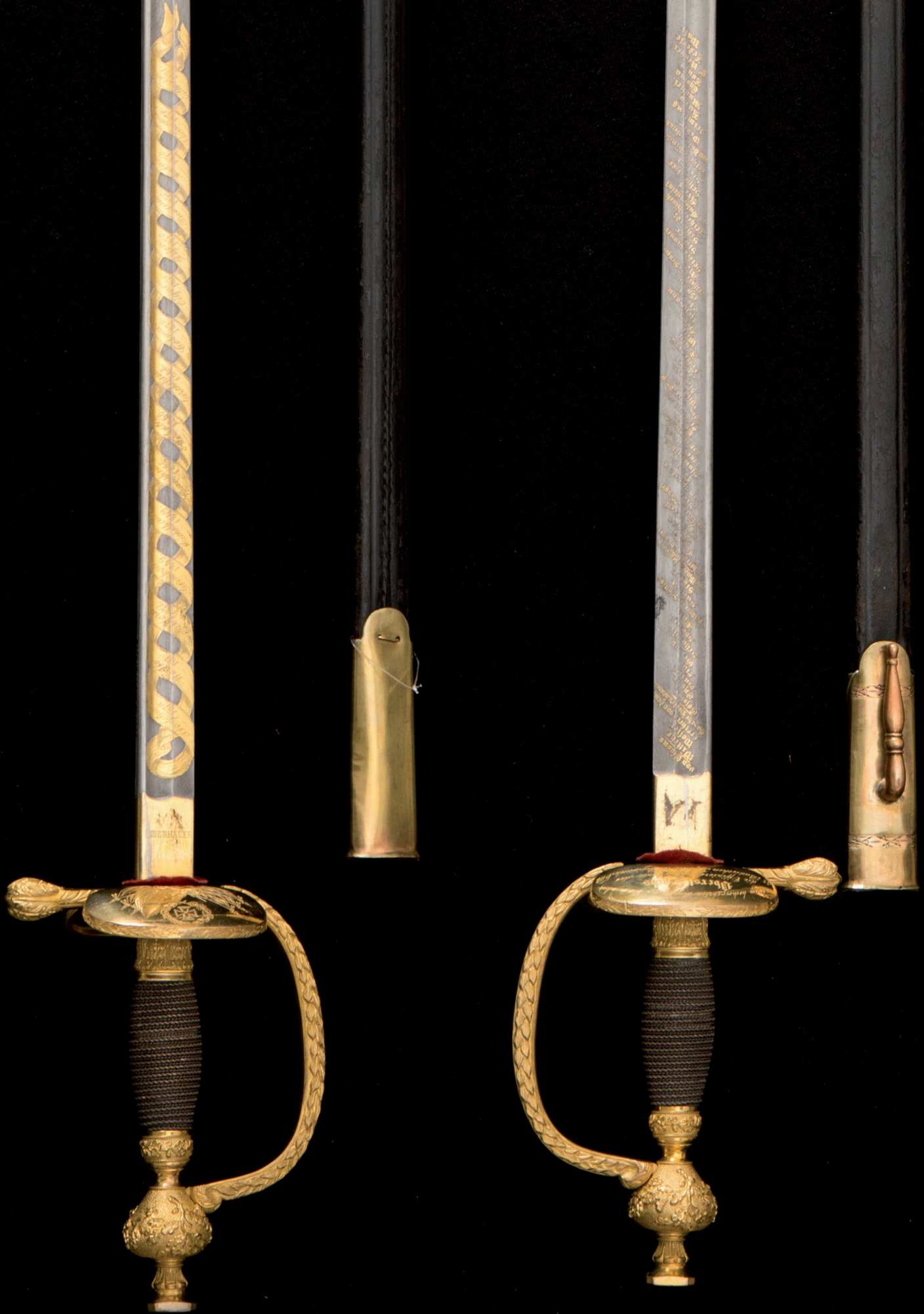

rsten Leopold von Hohenzollern
ilier-Regiments Hohenzollern.
385-1895

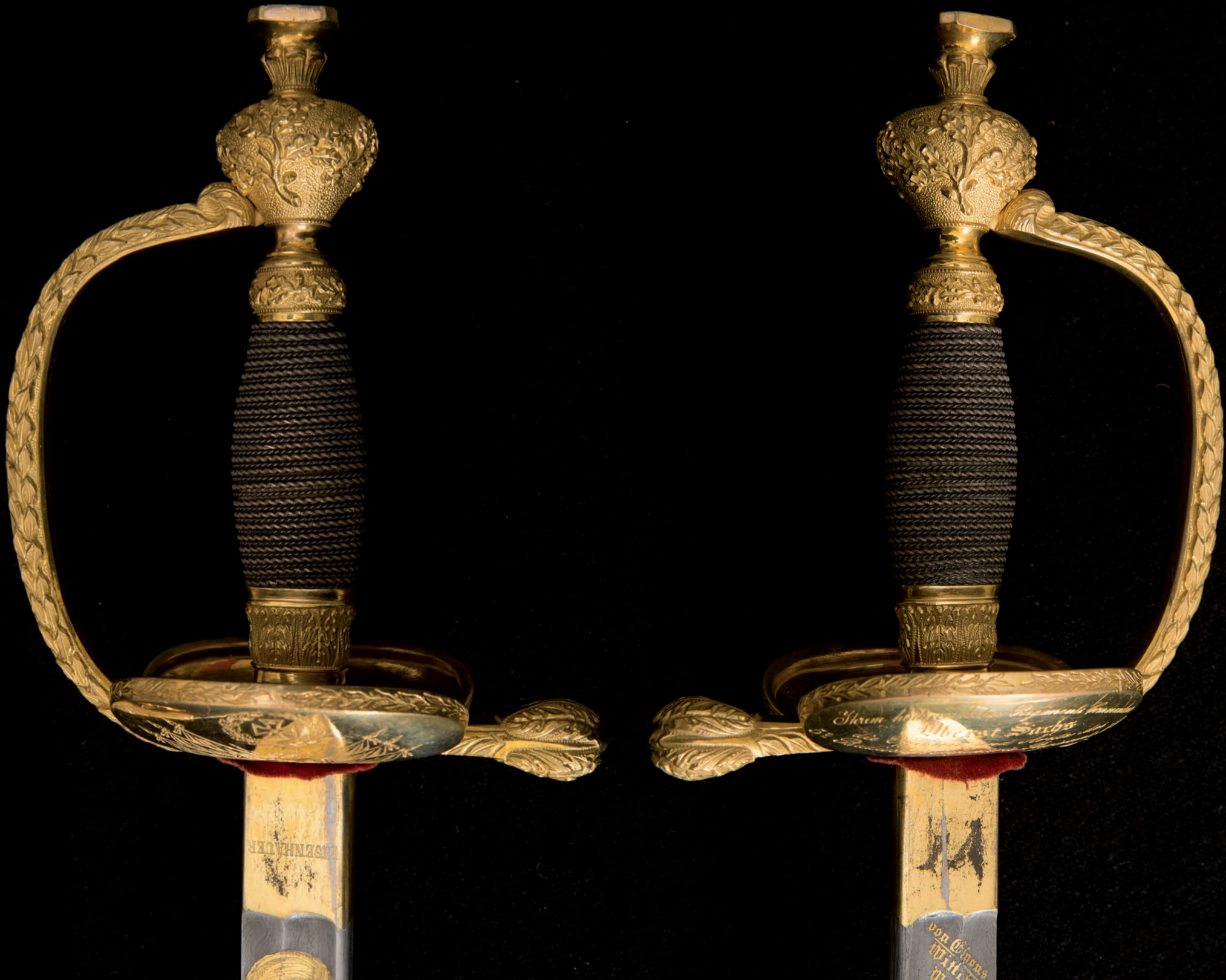


Infantry Officer Degen of Oberst Sachs











Infantry Officer Degen of Oberst Sachs

This presentation-grade, double clamshell officer degen was presented to the regimental commander of the 5th Baden Infantry Regiment No.113, Oberst Sachs, by the officers of the regiment. This form of infantry officer sword is often referred to as a "stichdegen" and is a descendent of the rapier.

The highly chiseled, elaborate hilt is entirely fire gilded with the obverse clamshell ornamented by crossed cannons and standards beneath a wreathed Iron Cross. The reverse clamshell features the dedication to Oberst Sachs.

The long straight and slender blade is fashioned from the finest folded Damascus steel. The obverse features a list, highlighted in gold, of the historical battles in which the regiment participated. On the reverse the name of each of the officers of the regiment who commissioned this sword are also listed in high relief.

The 5th Baden Infantry Regiment No.113 was founded on February 16, 1861 and garrisoned in Freiburg im Breisgau. As part of the XIV Army Corps, the unit participated in several major campaigns on the Western Front in the First World War.


von Ehoens
Witteke
Wolter
Freiherr von dem
Busche-Hadenhausen
Gosiak
Englar
Gnistel
Fiad
Gbendi
Schaikh
Sporin
Skuld
Freiherr von Schilling
Ruissen
Stubbe
von Wolde-Ascheberg
Freiherr von Thalmer
Kapfer
Gulliver
Gaya-Graff
Freiherr von Grengel
Sid
von Thorstein
Lanzia
Blumenthal
von Ehrenbrink
Fredrick
Roder
Wil



Infantry Officer Degen with a Serpentine Blade



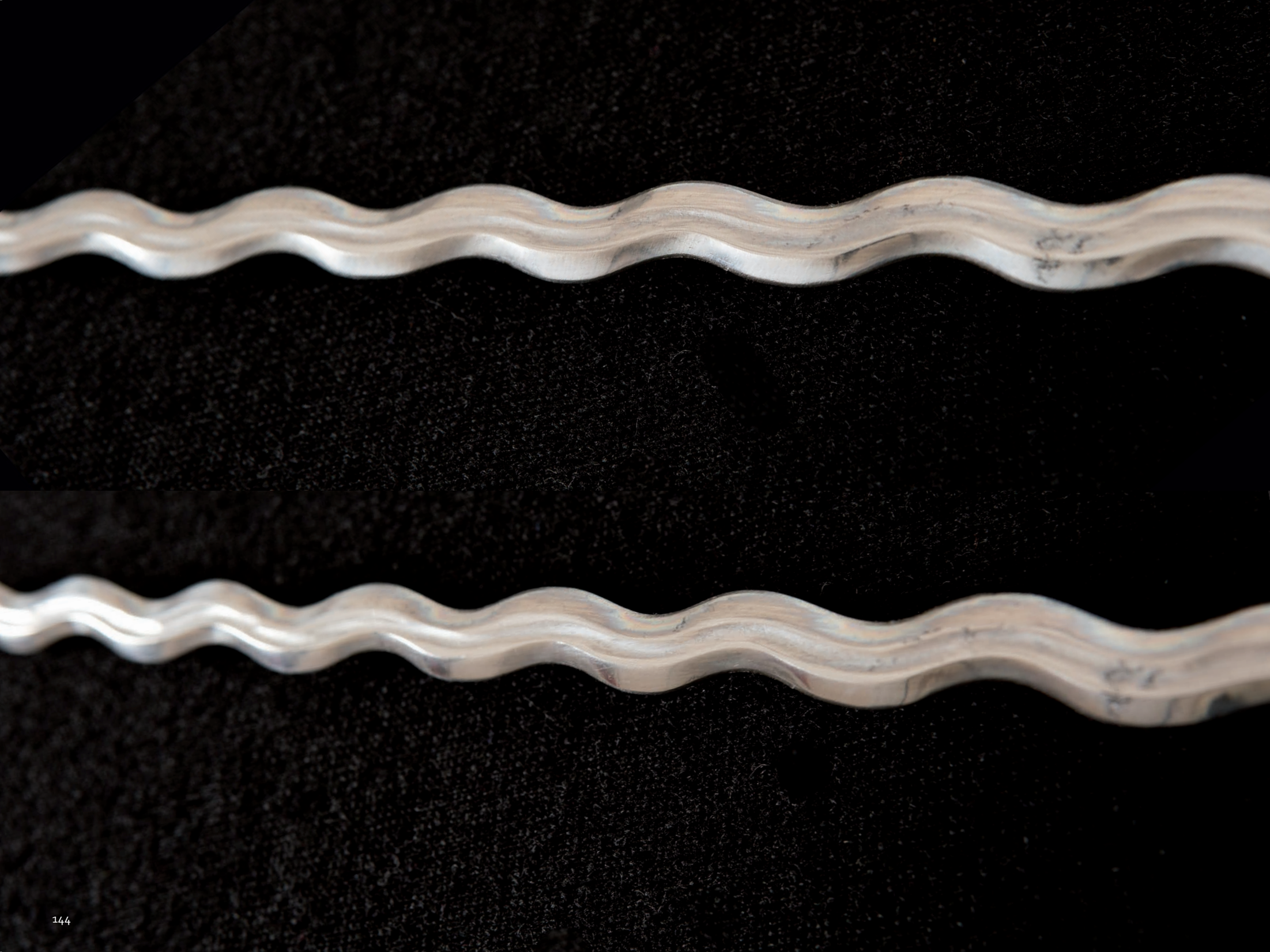




Unique Serpentine-Bladed Infantry Officer Degen

These blades began to appear in the early 16th century on Swiss Flambergé swords and were used by European landsknechte. They were double-edged swords with wavy, multiple-curved or serpentine blades usually over 18 inches in length. They are also seen, in a much lighter version, on Near Eastern swords from the same time period.

The blade which appears here on an Imperial Infantry Officer Degen appears to be of Near Eastern origin. It can only be guessed as to why it appears on this model German degen as it once belonged to an officer of the Prussian Infantry. The blade is constructed of mono-steel and is decorated with a layer of fire gilt near the ricasso. This is an interesting and unique weapon.





Infantry Saber of Oberleutnant Rudolf von Freydorf





Dem Hauptmann Rudolf von Freydorf
das Offizierkorps des 1. Badischen Leib Grenadier Regiments


Dem Hauptmann Rudolf von
das Offizierkorps des 1. Badischen Leib
zur Erinnerung an 25 jährige Dienstzeit im



Infantry Saber of Oberleutnant Rudolf von Freydorf

Rudolf von Freydorf was born October 15, 1868 in Karlsruhe. His father was the war minister of the Grand Duchy of Baden.

He served as an officer in the 1st Badischen Leibgrenadier Regiment Nr. 109 and took part in the First World War, attaining the rank of Oberleutnant. He died on May 18, 1940.

His saber shows a beautiful forged Damascus blade in the "maiden hair" pattern. It is adorned with a gilded etched engraving and was a present to Freydorf from the officer corps of his regiment on the occasion of his having given 25 years of service. Because he was a Knight of St. John of Jerusalem, the saber grip shows the star of this knight order.

Saber of the Grand Duke Friedrich I von Baden







Saber of the Grand Duke Friedrich I von Baden

Grand Duke Frederick was born in Karlsruhe on September 9, 1826. He was the third son of Grand Duke Leopold and his wife, Grand Duchess Sophie who was born Princess of Sweden, daughter of King Gustav IV Adolf of Sweden.

He became the heir presumptive to the Grand Duchy upon the death of his father in 1852 and the accession of his brother as Grand Duke Louis II. Due to his brother's ill mental health, he was regent ad interim of Baden from 1852 to 1855. He received the title of Grand Duke in 1856. His brother, Louis II, died in 1858. Frederick was considered a relatively liberal supporter of a constitutional monarchy. During his reign the option of civil marriages was introduced in Baden as well as direct elections to the Lower House of the Parliament of Baden in 1904. He was the benevolent ruler of the independent country neighbouring sovereign states Bavaria and Hesse-Darmstadt in what is now southwest Germany.

In 1856 Grand Duke Frederick married Princess Louise of Prussia who was the favorite daughter of Kaiser Wilhelm I. This dynastic marriage between a Grand Duke and the daughter of the first Emperor of Germany was a strategic masterstroke.

During the Franco-Prussian War in 1870–71, Frederick led his troops under Prussian high command into the battle.

Frederick I was present at the proclamation of the German Empire at Versailles in 1871, as he was one of the reigning sovereigns of Germany. He was the ruler who gave the first salute to the new Kaiser, while he shouted "a tribute to Kaiser Wilhelm!"

He died at his summer residence at the island of Mainau in southern Germany on September 28, 1907.







Hussar Officer Saber of Oberleutnant Bodo von dem Knesebeck











Hussar Officer Saber of Oberleutnant Bodo von dem Knesebeck

Bodo von dem Knesebeck (1851 in Munich–1911 in Kassel) was an Oberleutnant in the Life-Guard-Hussars Regiment, an elite unit of Guards Hussars for the Prussian King. Bodo served there as an officer and fought during the Franco-Prussian War. He also served as Secrétaire de Cabinet for Crown Princess Augusta, the grandmother of Wilhelm II.

Later he became Deputy Master of Ceremonies for Wilhelm II in Berlin and one of the founders of the Red Cross organization in Germany. On November 23, 1899, he was awarded the Royal Victorian Order, on the occasion of the visit of the German Emperor to the Queen. He also received the Grand Cross of the Black Eagle.

This elegant weapon was a farewell gift to von dem Knesebeck from his comrades in the Hussars. The blade is constructed of folded Damascus steel with decorations of blueing and heavy fire gilt. Even with the hand-ornamented hilt the weapon has a relatively normal appearance when worn by the owner. Only when the blade is drawn from the scabbard does the rare beauty and true essence of this gentleman's gift becomes apparent.






Dem scheidenden
Dem scheidenden Kameraden
Premierlieutenant
v. d. Knesebeck
zur neuen


ameraden
Premierlieutenant
v. d. H
werung
des Offizier-Corps
des Königs-Husaren-Regiments

Imperial Naval Daggers



Introduction to Imperial Naval Daggers

1890 Pattern Dagger for Sea Cadets and Midshipmen according to the 1890 Regulations

In October 1890 by highest Cabinet order sea cadets and midshipmen were authorized to carry a new pattern dagger with the following specifications:

"Straight, and sharp on both sides from the middle falling off to the edges, and with etched ornamentation—fouled anchor with the Imperial crown—decorated 34 cm long blade in double-layered gilded metal, 36 cm long scabbard with two hangers and carrying rings.

The round, and at both ends knob-like reinforced gilded metal 8 cm cross guard has on each of both sides of the central square a fouled anchor. The ivory hilt is topped with a gilded Imperial crown, which appears to be with closed cross arches, cannot be unscrewed and is firmly riveted. The total length of the hilt, from the point of the lower edge of the blade to the tip of the Imperial crown is 13 cm. The dagger blade is held firmly in the scabbard by a retaining spring."

The introduction of the naval dagger was restricted to wear by cadets only. Officers who had completed their training and had received their commission, were permitted to only carry the naval saber.

Daggers for Naval Officers according to the 1901 Regulations

In September 1901 a meeting of the German and Russian fleets was held in Danzig, with Emperor Wilhelm II and his cousin Tsar Nicholas II. During an evening dinner the German Kaiser, in acknowledgment of services rendered by the German maneuver units, allowed the Naval Officers Corps the re-introduction of the dagger for wear by officers. This also elegantly paid an indirect compliment to the Russian Tsar as all Russian naval officers carried a dagger. The Russian Navy was seen as an exemplary model for the German Navy.

The prescribed dagger was virtually identical to the pattern established in 1890 for sea cadets and midshipmen. However, it had an open crown that could be unscrewed and wiring around the hilt that gave a braided effect. Officers were required to purchase their own equipment, including their own sidearms. Consequently personal preferences arose and were accommodated by naval authorities. This is why naval officers often chose short, easy-to-wear daggers decorated with various features of ornamentation and differing styles of blades. Many officers continued to use their old cadet daggers, often in modified form to bring the dagger in conformance with 1901 regulations. For example, the blade and scabbard were shortened in order to accommodate a more comfortable, shorter dagger. Crown pommels with damaged cross-arms were replaced or the old hilt and scabbard would be shortened and a new, shorter blade installed.

Sometimes the weapons were carried in their original form and only a dagger knot was tied around the hilt. Officers took pleasure in a certain freedom of choice regarding their edged weapons and took full advantage of this. The dagger was one of the few aspects of their appearance in which a measure of individuality could be achieved.

Personalization of Imperial Naval Daggers

Sea cadets and midshipmen were not allowed any kind of personal decoration, verse or other information on their weapons save their name, and anything applied by the manufacturer. The young men largely complied with this and had their names engraved below the reverse scabbard mouth.

Personalized daggers of the 1890 pattern are extremely interesting to collectors and those fascinated by history. From the engravings of names, together with the complete and antiquarian rank lists of the Imperial Navy, it is occasionally possible to research and document the background of the original owner.

The often shorter and more elaborate daggers of the naval officers display a wider range of custom and decorative features as officers were allowed a greater degree of freedom. We find dedications, names and quotations usually on the blade but they are also to be found on the scabbard. The occurrence of engraved names sometimes enables collectors and historians to trace the background of the weapon and above all reveal that of the bearer. This is regrettably often only possible when the original owner had an unusual or uncommon name. The type of dagger and manufacturer marks helps to give an estimation of the possible time period.



Imperial Naval Engineer Dress Bayonet of Leutnant Paul Jäschen













Imperial Naval Engineer Dress Bayonet of Leutnant Paul Jäschen

Until 1918, officer aspirants with a technical specialty and proficiency such as engineering or accounting wore the Navy Dress Bayonet.

Jäschen's bayonet is a typical example with gold gilded brass construction, a folding clamshell guard and a plated blade etched with a nautical theme. The imperial crown over fouled anchor motif is present in the blade etch and on the hilt. Jäschen's name is engraved by a jeweler on the cross guard reverse, a rarely seen feature on these sidearms.

Paul Jäschen was born June 29, 1893. He entered the Kaiserliche Marine in October 1911 and completed his training aboard the SMS *Westfalen*. He went on to Naval Engineering School in September 1915 followed by an assignment aboard the SMS *Thuringen* in March 1917. After entering U-boat School in September 1917, he was assigned to *UB-50* operating in the Mediterranean Sea.

In October 1918 Jäschen was reassigned to *UB-68* serving as chief engineer. As an experienced officer, Jaschen was responsible for the operation and maintenance of the U-boat's mechanical systems, including the engines, motors, and batteries. The chief engineer also had the responsibility of scuttling the U-boat if required. The commander of *UB-68* was Oberleutnant zur See Karl Dönitz.

Dönitz was later to become Commander in Chief of the U-boat arm of the Kriegsmarine. Later, he would replace Grossadmiral Eric Raeder as CiC of the entire Kriegsmarine.

While Dönitz on the one hand proved to be a courageous and skilled naval commander, he was also very loyal to Hitler and deeply entangled in the Nazi war machinery. Consequently, on April 29, 1945 Hitler in his last will and testament appointed Dönitz as his successor and head of state upon his death. After Hitler took his own life the following day, Dönitz became the acting President of Germany. He would remain in this role until May 23, 1945.

UB-68 was operating in the shipping lanes of the Mediterranean Sea southeast of Malta on October 4, 1918 while under the command of Dönitz. In the dark, early morning hours, *UB-68* made a surface attack on a convoy and sunk the British steamer SS *Oopac*. Dönitz commenced a second attack on the convoy firing two additional torpedoes but missed. Fortunately, the convoy remained unaware of *UB-68*'s position.

As dawn rapidly approached however, *UB-68* had to submerge to remain undetected by the convoy. During diving, the *UB-68* experienced extreme longitudinal instability and difficulty, alternately and dangerously plunging too deep followed by rapid surfacing and breaching of the sea's surface. With their position revealed due to surface breaching of *UB-68*'s stern, HMS *Snapdragon* and HM Trawler *Cradosin* began shelling the U-boat. *UB-68* was a sitting duck with no possibility of escape. After two direct shell hits Dönitz ordered his crew to abandon ship and the *UB-68* to be scuttled. chief engineer



HMS Snapdragon

Leutnant Paul Jäschen faithfully following orders opened the seacocks and the boat sank in eight seconds taking Jäschen with her.

HMS *Snapdragon* retrieved the survivors including Dönitz. They were subsequently interned on the island of Malta. The British later released Dönitz in June 1919. During his time as a POW, Dönitz formulated his "Wolf Pack" U-boat strategy that emphasized coordinated attacks utilizing multiple U-boats versus attacks by a singular submarine as a way of combating the effectiveness of Allied convoys. The "Wolf Pack" tactics for submarine warfare proved lethal to Allied shipping early in the Second World War.

In his memoirs, Grossadmiral Karl Dönitz remembered the difficult decision he had to make on that fateful day in October 1918 and the loyalty and bravery of his chief engineer Leutnant Paul Jäschen. Later, while serving in the Kriegsmarine, official travel required a Mediterranean passage that took him directly over the location of where *UB-68* was scuttled. As his ship sailed over the coordinates of where *UB-68* lay on the sea floor, he stood alone on the stern saluting under a dipped flag paying his profound respects to his fallen chief engineer Paul Jäschen and *UB-68*.

Imperial Naval Officer Dagger of Kapitänleutnant Hans von Santen





Imperial Naval Officer Dagger of Kapitänleutnant Hans von Santen

This dagger belonged to Kapitänleutnant Hans von Santen. He is noteworthy as one of the few early naval aviators of the First World War. Von Santen was born July 4, 1890. He entered the Kaiserliche Marine in April 1908. Upon completion of studies he was assigned to the battleship SMS *Posen* as an officer aspirant. The *Posen* was the flagship of the II Division of the I Battle Squadron. Von Santen participated in fleet maneuvers that year in Norway and the Baltic. Upon receiving his commission in 1912, von Santen was transferred to the armored cruiser SMS *Friedrich Carl*, which was the flagship of the German cruiser squadron in the Baltic Sea. In October 1914, the *Friedrich Carl* became the first German warship to be equipped with seaplanes for reconnaissance. While stationed in Neufahrwasser, Danzig in November 1914, the *Friedrich Carl* was ordered to attack the Russian port of Libau to prevent it from being utilized as an enemy submarine base. While cruising 35 miles off Memel, she struck two Russian mines. The ship was kept afloat for several hours enabling the crew to be removed. Only seven sailors lost their lives. She capsized and sank in the early morning hours of November 17, 1914. Von Santen survived the sinking and that year took command of the Minesweeper *Hever A*.

Von Santen must have had his fill of waterborne craft after surviving the sinking and his introduction to early aviation aboard the SMS *Friedrich Carl*. Only six months after receiving his own command he was transferred to the Navy Land Flying Detachment at Johannisthal Air Field near Berlin for flight training.

Upon completion of instruction, von Santen was assigned to the II Sea Flying Detachment in Flanders followed by the Sea Plane Detachment as Zeebrugge Naval Air Station in Belgium. During the First World War, the German Marinekorps Flandern, a tactical unit of the Imperial German Navy, defended most of the Belgian coast. These Marines fought bravely alongside Army soldiers in the trenches of Flanders. Zeebrugge is located at the mouth of the canal of one of the most important harbors at Bruges for the Imperial German Navy, the base of a torpedo boat flotilla and U-boats. Naval air units were responsible for reconnaissance over the North Sea and the trenches, undertaking bombing missions over England and the defense against enemy action from the air.

As aviation technology and fighting tactics quickly evolved it became necessary for the naval air units to develop their own single-seat fighter units to provide protection, escort and cover for the naval air reconnaissance and bombing units. These first units were called KEKs (Kampf Einsitzer Kommando) or single-seat fighter command. The first unit was established about April 1916. In January 1917, Oberleutnant von Santen became the commander of the newly formed KEK for the II Navy Flying Detachment Flanders stationed at the Nieuwmunster aerodrome. Here they received new state-of-the-art fighter aircrafts and were tasked with protecting naval air units of the Marinekorps Flandern.

In August 1917 von Santen became Chief of the Navy Land Flyers detachment in Holtenau near Kiel. This was followed by an assignment to the Angernsee aerodrome in present-day Latvia. They conducted patrol and observation missions over the Baltic Sea and the Gulf of Riga. Von Santen's last assignment until the end of the war was as Chief of the Naval Air Stations in Libau (now Liepaja, Latvia) and Papensholm. Papensholm was charged with the training of Finnish pilots. Von Santen was discharged from the Navy on June 3, 1920.

This is a standard 1890 pattern cadet dagger with an ivory grip and etched plated blade.




Gunter



Highly decorated Oberleutnant zur See serving in the Imperial Navy Air Service as an observer



Imperial Navy aircraft patrolling the coast

Imperial Naval Officer Dagger of Korvettenkapitän Gerhard Stubenrauch




Stubenrauch



Imperial Naval Officer Dagger of Korvettenkapitän Gerhard Stubenrauch

Gerhard Stubenrauch was born on February 7, 1880 and joined the Imperial Navy on April 7, 1897. Stubenrauch came from a prominent military family as his father Felix, was a konteradmiral in the Imperial Navy.

On April 27, 1898 Gerhard Stubenrauch entered the Naval Academy in Mürwik as a seekadett. After receiving his officer commission, he served as the commanding officer in 1905 on board the torpedo boat *G110*, an escort vessel of the SMS *Meteor*. On this class one (ranking) gunship Kaiser Wilhelm II was travelling to Cowes Week, an international sailing regatta held around the Isle of Wight, England, when an accident happened near Cowes. Stubenrauch presumably saved someone's life as he was awarded the Prussian Lifesavers Medal.

In the early years of the First World War he served aboard the SMS *Pommern* and *Wettin*, a ship he commanded in April 1916. Later in the war he became Staff Officer of the first naval air unit squadron and commander of the Naval Air Corps Flanders. In June 1917 he became commander of the entire air arm of the Imperial Navy.

In October 1918 Stubenrauch served as First Officer on the battleship cruiser SMS *Moltke*. After scuttling the ship in Scapa Flow, Stubenrauch was discharged from the Navy. His final promotion to korvettenkapitän followed his discharge, taking effect August 30, 1919. Gerhard Stubenrauch was a bearer of the Order of the Red Eagle and the Iron Cross First Class. He died in October 4, 1931.

This is an early dagger from around 1898. The dagger has a closed crown pommel rivited to the tang as regulated for cadet daggers. The cross guard and scabbard are produced in gold-gilded brass. The grip is made of hand-carved ivory. The blade is a hand-forged Damascus steel blade. The name "Stubenrauch" is etched into the ricasso and engraved on the underside of the scabbard locket. The attached portepée is original to the dagger. This indicates that the dagger was worn by Stubenrauch when he became an officer.



Imperial Naval Dagger of Oberleutnant Alfred Rühle





Imperial Naval Dagger of Oberleutnant Alfred Rühle

Alfred Rühle was born January 14, 1894. He entered the Navy shortly before the outbreak of the Great War in April 1913. He quickly transferred to the Naval Flyers Detachment, a relatively new unit, in September 1914.

Through June 1915 he trained to become a fighter pilot and observer at Johannisthal and Putzig. Upon completion of training he was assigned to the former British merchant ship SMS *Glyndwr*. This ship had been seized in Danzig by Germany when hostilities broke out in the First World War. It was redesigned to become an early type of "aircraft-carrier." The ship carried some observation aircraft as well as fighting machines. A crane was used to hoist them and put them to sea when needed. Rühle served aboard the SMS *Glyndwr* until August 1916 as pilot and observer.

After that time he flew for the Naval Flyers in Libau and Windau, East Prussia. As an experienced flyer and observer, he became principal of the Flyer and Observer School on the Rügen Island in July 1917. He served in this capacity until the end of the war.

Rühle left the Navy in November 1919 and was promoted to Oberleutnant in 1920.





Flying crew mission briefing



Aircraft launch preparation



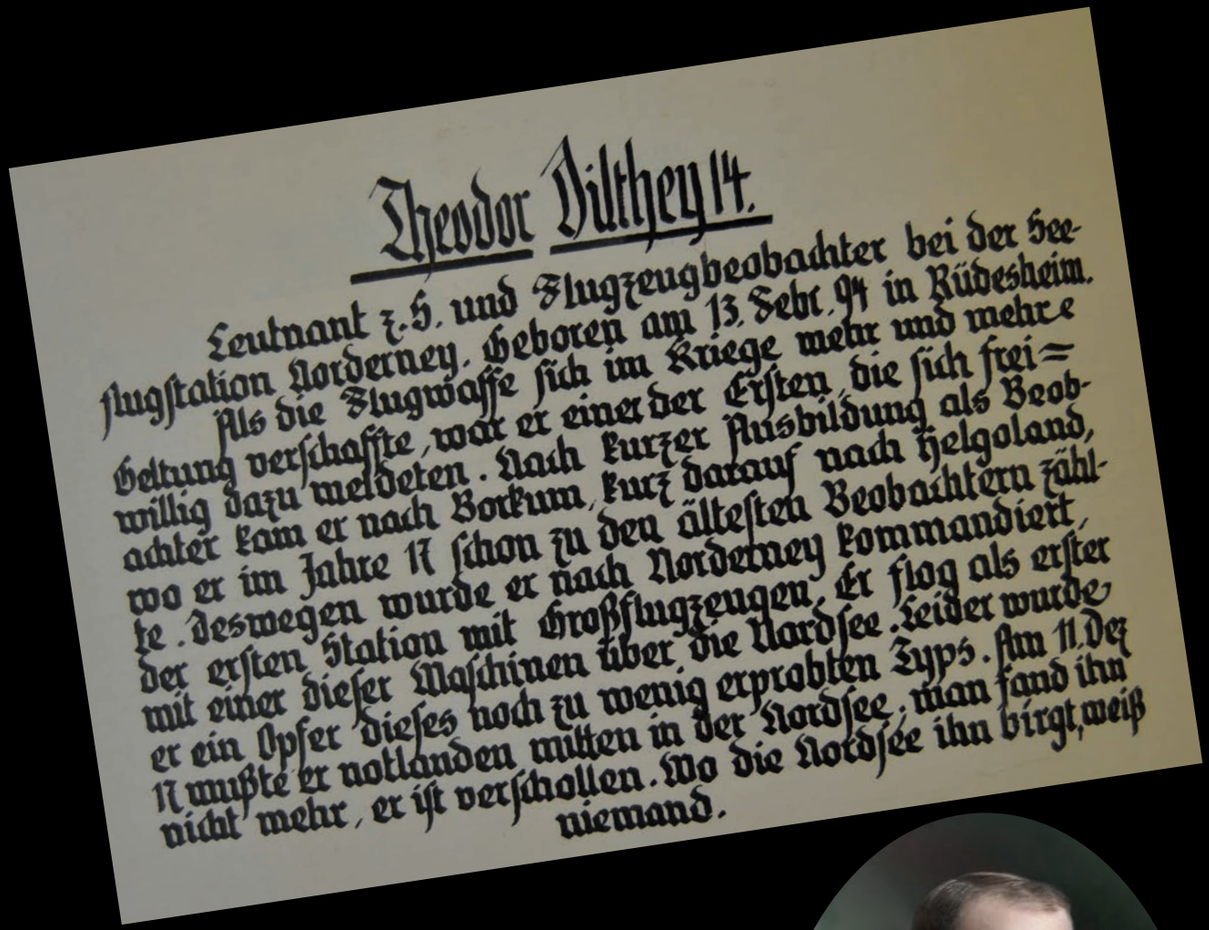
Turkish pilots training with a German squad


Rühle

Imperial Naval Officer Dagger of Leutnant Theodore Christian Dilthey







Theodor Dilthey 14.

Leutnant z.S. und Flugzeugbeobachter bei der See-
flugstation Norderney, geboren am 13. Febr. 94 in Rüdesheim.
Als die Flugwaffe sich im Kriege mehr und mehr
Geltung verschaffte, war er einer der Ersten, die sich frei-
willig dazu meldeten. Nach kurzer Ausbildung als Beob-
achter kam er nach Borkum, kurz darauf nach Helgoland,
wo er im Jahre 17 schon zu den ältesten Beobachtern zähl-
te. Deswegen wurde er nach Norderney kommandiert,
der ersten Station mit Großflugzeugen. Er flog als erster
mit einer dieser Maschinen über die Nordsee. Leider wurde
er ein Opfer dieses noch zu wenig erprobten Typs. Am 11. Dez
17 mußte er notlanden mitten in der Nordsee, man fand ihn
nicht mehr, er ist verschollen. Wo die Nordsee ihn birgt, weiß
niemand.

Honor Page of Dilthey
in the Mürwik Navy School



Lt. Theodore Christian Dilthey

Imperial Naval Officer Dagger of Leutnant Theodore Christian Dilthey

This Imperial Navy officer dagger belonged to naval aviator Theodore Christian Dilthey. Dilthey was born to a well-known family in Ruedesheim on February 2, 1894. He entered the Navy in April 1914. He was an officer aspirant aboard the SMS *Prinzregent Luitpold* until receiving his commission as a leutnant in January 1916. Dilthey attended flight school until June 1916 and then was assigned to the 2nd Sea Fliers Squadron stationed in Norderney on the North Sea coast of Germany. The primary mission of this unit was reconnaissance and combat patrols along the German Bight. These pioneering naval aviators faced the perils of early maritime aviation with relatively crude equipment and navigational aids all the while braving unpredictable weather conditions.

Theodore Dilthey was awarded the Iron Cross Second Class during his short career. Sadly, he lost his life in action on December 11, 1917 due to engine failure.





Imperial Naval Officer Dagger of Korvettenkapitän Kurt Graf zu Rantzau





Imperial Naval Officer Dagger of Korvettenkapitän Kurt Graf (Count) zu Rantzau

This 1890 pattern Imperial Navy cadet dagger belonged to Kurt Graf (Count) zu Rantzau, a descendant of a noble family dating back to the 13th century. He was the only member of this aristocratic family to have a naval career. Born March 10, 1894 in Doberitz Pomerania, he entered the Navy in April 1913.

Kurt Graf zu Rantzau served as a Leutnant zur See aboard various light cruisers throughout the First World War. While serving aboard the SMS *Kolberg* on January 24, 1915, he was wounded in the battle of Dogger Bank when the SMS *Kolberg* and the British cruiser HMS *Aurora* exchanged fire scoring two hits each. In August 1915, he also saw action in the battle of the Gulf of Riga in the Baltic Sea. SMS *Kolberg* acting as a torpedo boat flotilla leader, was narrowly missed by a torpedo fired by a Russian U-boat. The Graf zu Rantzau also saw assignments on the SMS *Regensburg* until July 1917 and SMS *Stralsund* until February 1918 before his last assignment until the end of the war aboard the SMS *Karlsruhe II*.

The SMS *Karlsruhe II* along with most of the German High Seas Fleet, was interned at the British naval base of Scapa Flow in the Orkney Islands during the protracted peace negotiations following the capitulation of Germany in November 1918. These negotiations culminated in the detested Versailles Treaty. On the morning of June 21, 1919 anticipating the seizure of the vessels of the High Seas Fleet by the British, German Rear Admiral Ludwig von Reuter ordered all interned ships to be scuttled. Kurt Graf zu Rantzau as an officer aboard the SMS *Karlsruhe II* likely participated in carrying out these orders. The SMS *Karlsruhe II* decks were awash by 3:50 pm. Kurt Graf zu Rantzau was later promoted in February 1920 to Kapitänleutnant.

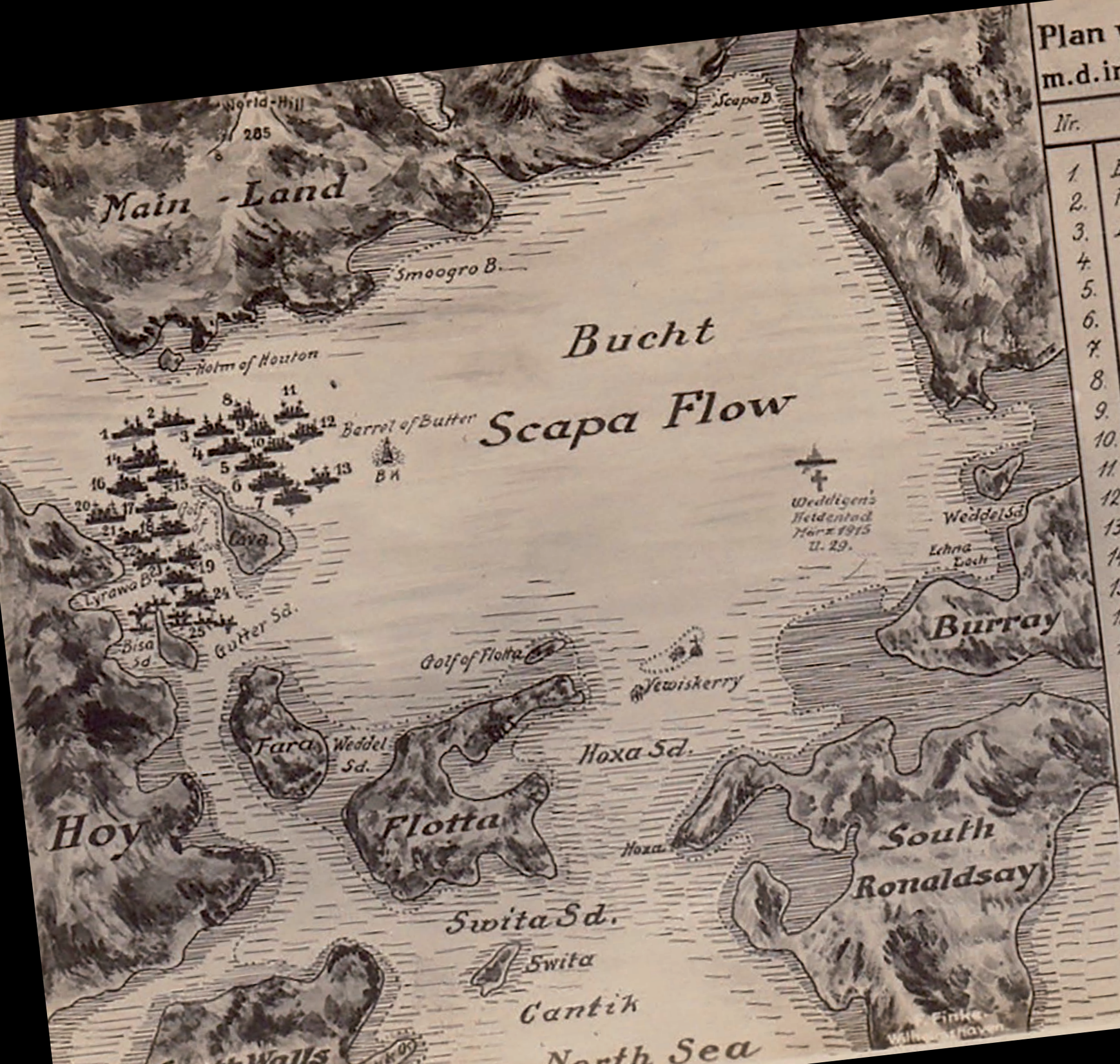


Kurt Graf zu Rantzau also served for the duration of the Second World War, primarily aboard Sperrbrechers (path-finder-auxiliary minesweepers) escorting U-boats and capital ships safely through minefields and other dangerous obstacles. After an assignment as the station officer of Wilhelmshaven from August 1939 to October 1940, he was assigned to *Sperrbrecher 4* until February 1942. His leadership must have impressed his superiors as he became commander of *Sperrbrecher 174* until May 1942 and commander of *SG-1* until July 1943. After a short assignment in the 7th Security Division, he became commander of *Sperrbrecher 33* in January 1944. Lastly, in March 1945 he became an escort officer in the 8th Security Division until August 1945. He attained the rank of Korvettenkapitän.

Kurt Graf zu Rantzau was the father of Detlev Graf zu Rantzau who had a long and distinguished career in the German Diplomatic and Foreign Service and as a representative to NATO in various capacities. Kurt Graf zu Rantzau died on November 7, 1951.



Map of the interned Imperial German fleet in Scapa Flow



Plan von Scapa-Flow m.d.intern.deutsch.Flotte

Nr.	Namen
1.	Baden
2.	Friedr.d.Große
3.	Bayern
4.	Gr. Kurfürst
5.	Kronpr. Wilhelm
6.	Markgraf
7.	König
8.	Emden (Flaggschiff)
9.	Brummer
10.	Bremse
11.	Frankfurt
12.	Cöln
13.	Dresden
14	König Albert
15.	Karlsruhe
16.	Kaiserin
17.	Prinzregt. Luitpold
18.	Kaiser
19.	Nürnberg
20.	Derfflinger
21.	Hindenburg
22.	v.d.Tann
23.	Moltke
24.	Seydlitz
25.	Torpedoboote

Copyright 1919 by F. Finke, Wilhelm
Entw. Mar. Pfr. Ronneberger Scapa



Imperial Naval Deluxe Officer Dagger





Deluxe Naval Officer Dagger with Blade Forged by the Damastschmied Max Dinger

This officer dagger has many extra cost features, most notably, a hand-forged Damascus steel blade forged by famous swordsmith Max Dinger.

While few swordsmiths in Solingen, Germany, continued to forge folded steel blades in the early 1900s, Max Dinger was recognized as master of the art during the time. He was commissioned to supply Damascus blades by firms requiring the highest quality. Dinger was the end of a long line in a family of swordsmiths dating back 400 years. The art of Damascus blade forging was a closely guarded family secret with the techniques passed from father to son. The secret was lost when Max Dinger passed away suddenly in 1911.

The dual fuller blade is an un-plated Damascus steel in the pattern commonly referred to as "maiden hair" or Damaststahl. The blade is stamped on the tang with the mark M+D that Max Dinger used to signify his work. His blades are characteristically forged in very fine layers of exquisite quality and are some of the thinnest and most beautiful blades forged in the period.

This ornate custom hand-chased scabbard is model 61 in the 1902 Carl Kaiser & Cie sales catalog. All fittings including the cross guard and open-crown pommel, are heavily gold fire gilded. The grip is hand-turned genuine ivory.





Deluxe Imperial Naval Officer "Heavy" Dagger of Prince Wilhelm Friedrich

















Deluxe Imperial Naval Officer "Heavy" Dagger of Prince Wilhelm Friedrich

This elaborate, extremely rare 1901 pattern Deluxe "Heavy" Imperial Navy Officer dagger belonged to Prince Wilhelm Friedrich Christian Günther Albert Adolf George of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Glücksburg.

Prince Wilhelm Friedrich was born August 23, 1891 at the Grünholz Estate near Eckernförde. He was the only son born to Friedrich Ferdinand, Duke of Schleswig–Holstein-Sonderburg-Glücksburg and Princess Karoline Mathilde of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Augustenburg, a younger sister to the German Empress, Auguste Victoria, wife of King Wilhelm II.

Prince Wilhelm Friedrich entered the Imperial Navy on April 1, 1910. Beginning in January 1914, he served as a Leutnant zur See aboard the battleship SMS *Schleswig-Holstein* of the Second Battle Squadron, High Seas Fleet. The prince saw operations guarding the mouth of the Elbe River and in support of the coastal bombardment of England. In November 1915 he was transferred to the battle cruiser SMS *Lützow* assigned to the sick bay until the end of 1915. He was later assigned to the North Sea Station Command where he remained until the end of the First World War. He left the Navy in October 1918.

Prince Wilhelm Friedrich remained in a reserve status as late as 1944. He served as a Navy Kapitänleutnant and Battalion Commander in the German Volkssturm, a last-ditch troop of elderly men and boys. His unit was never called to action.

Upon his father's passing on January 21, 1934, Prince Wilhelm Friedrich became head of the House of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Glücksburg with the title of Duke. Duke Wilhelm Friedrich died February 10, 1965 in Coburg, Bavaria.

This dagger, of immense proportions, epitomizes the fine art of edged-weapon production. The example shown was produced by Weyersberg, Kirschbaum & Co. about 1910. The finely made, elaborate scabbard has a nautical theme hand chased in the repoussé style on both the obverse and reverse. The cross guard is a large capstan style conforming to period regulations. The open crown pommel is proportionately scaled and finely hand chiseled. All fittings including the scabbard are heavily fire-gilded.

The massive blade is genuine Damascus steel of the "maiden hair" pattern. On the obverse ricasso is a very finely executed raised facsimile of the House of Glücksburg coat–of–arms. It is finely nickel plated against the etched, un-plated, dual fuller Damascus blade. The gold wire-wrapped grip is of genuine ivory.



Marriage of Marie Melita of Hohenlohe-Langenburg with Hereditary Prince Friedrich of Holstein-Glücksburg, February 15, 1916



Leutnant zur See Wilhelm Friederich

Imperial Naval Officer Dagger of Viceadmiral Hans-Erich Voß







Voß aboard ship carrying his dagger

Imperial Naval Officer Dagger of Viceadmiral Hans-Erich Voß

This historic Imperial Navy officer dagger belonged to Viceadmiral Hans-Erich Voß. Voß enjoyed a long and highly distinguished career spanning nearly three decades and served in both world wars. The genuine ivory grip of his dagger features in gold gilded brass the imperial cypher of Princess Sophie Charlotte of Oldenburg and the year 1918. The reverse of the scabbard features Voß's name engraved below the scabbard throat. Voß wore this dagger throughout his career.

Admiral Voß was born on October 30, 1897 in Angermunde, Brandenburg, Germany. He received his commission in the Imperial German Navy as Leutnant on September 17, 1917 after serving as an officer aspirant aboard the SMS *Freya*, SMS *Bremen* and the SMS *Berlin*. He served on the SMS *Nürnberg* until near the end of the First World War.

Princess Sophie Charlotte was the daughter-in-law of Kaiser Wilhelm II, married to his son Prince Eitel Friedrich of Prussia. Princess Sophie Charlotte presented this dagger to Voß in recognition of his loyal service as her aide-de-camp and guardian of her estate upon abdication of Kaiser Wilhelm near the end of the First World War. According to Voß's family, he was responsible for securing safe travel and security of the princess and her family.

During the interwar years, Voß remained in the German Navy (Reichsmarine) and was promoted to Kapitänleutnant in January 1921 followed by Korvettenkapitän in January 1928.

During the Second World War Voß held many leadership positions in various departments of the Headquarters of the Kriegsmarine from 1938 until 1942. Voß served as the commander of the heavy cruiser *Prinz Eugen* from September 1942 to February 1943. His leadership and loyalty caught the attention of Joseph Goebbels, Reich Propaganda Minister, when he accompanied journalists visiting aboard the ship. Following this meeting, Goebbels arranged to have Voß assigned as Naval Liaison Officer to Hitler's Headquarters in March 1943.

Voß participated in many of the key events surrounding Adolf Hitler. He was present and wounded at the assassination attempt on Hitler on July 20, 1944 when a bomb was detonated under the conference room table at Hitler's Rastenburg Headquarters "Wolfsschanze". Consequently, Voß was a recipient of the July 20, 1944 Wound Badge. Due to subsequent injuries, Voß was the only member of the German Wehrmacht to have received all three grades of the wound badge, in black, silver and gold. Voß was subsequently promoted to Viceadmiral in August 1944 while serving at Adolf Hitler's headquarters.

In January 1945 during the battle of Berlin, Admiral Voß accompanied Hitler's staff, key Nazi Party officials and Hitler's inner circle to the Führerbunker under the Reich Chancellery building. He became a close confidant of Joseph Goebbels and his family during the final days of the Third Reich. Voß was one of the last people to speak with Hitler before he committed suicide. Voß was one of the nine of Hitler's closest staff—along with two generals, three aides–de-camp; his personal pilot, chauffeur and his valet—whom Hitler informed of his intent to commit suicide.

On May 1 Voß informed Joseph Goebbels of Hitler's fate and was one of the last to see Goebbels and his family alive. Led by SS-Brigadefuhrer Wilhelm Mohnke, Voß and a few remaining officers attempted to break out of the bunker and escape Berlin. Russian forces captured most of them on the same day including Voß. Voß was brought back to the bunker for questioning and identified the bodies of the entire Goebbels family, the children killed by their parents, who committed suicide.

Voß became a prisoner of war in Russia and was later sentenced to 25 years in prison in February 1952. He was charged with holding "a command post in Hitler's war fleet that was involved in the aggressive war in breach of international laws and treaties." Authorities released him in December 1954 and he went into retirement in Berchtesgaden, Bavaria. He died on November 18, 1969 and is buried in this lovely area of the Bavarian Alps at the Bergfriedhof in Berchtesgaden.



Voß wearing his honor dagger



Princess Sophie Charlotte of Oldenburg




1918


1918

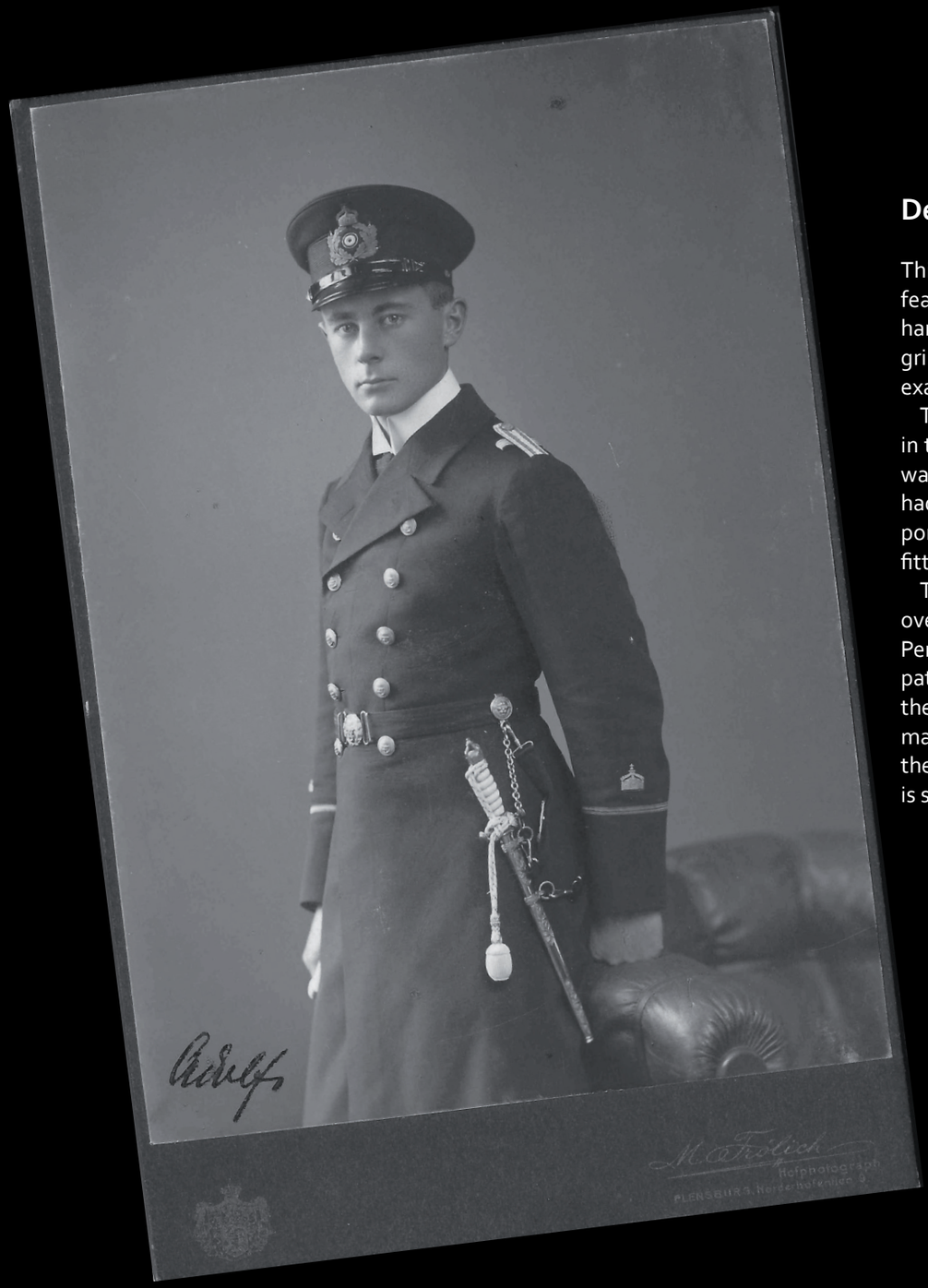
Deluxe Imperial Naval Officer Dagger











Deluxe Imperial Naval Officer Dagger

This deluxe officer dagger features many extra cost features. A hand-forged Damascus steel blade, hand-chased, deluxe scabbard and genuine ivory grip clearly defines this dagger as a custom order example.

The ornate scabbard is very similar to model 340 in the Aug. Lüneburg sales catalog. Aug. Lüneburg was a supplier of private purchase naval effects and had firms in Kiel and Flensburg. The open-crown pommel is characteristic of this pattern dagger. All fittings are heavily gold fire gilded.

The dual fuller blade is a classic nickel plate over Damascus steel in the "maiden hair" pattern. Period catalogs more appropriately refer to this pattern as Damaststahl. The blade is stamped on the reverse with the Weyersberg, Kirschbaum & Co. maker's mark used after about 1910. Additionally, the distributor mark of GB&S over crossed swords is stamped on the obverse.

Officer wearing a deluxe Imperial Navy dagger

Deluxe Imperial Naval Officer "Heavy" Dagger of Korvettenkapitän Robert Zimmermann




Hans s/L. Bobby. 7.2.03.













Deluxe Imperial Naval Officer "Heavy" Dagger of Korvettenkapitän Robert Zimmermann

When we look at German Imperial naval daggers we see a wide variety of different styles, decorations and patterns. Some officers decided to retain their 1890 cadet dagger, some bought smaller daggers and a very few wore larger ones, the so-called "heavy" daggers.

"Heavy" daggers are sought after by collectors worldwide because they always reflect the advanced art of the German craftsmanship and many of them are named or dedicated, and often enriched with history. This is the case here. Even with a modestly decorated scabbard, the blade is of a remarkable construction. We see a full-length hand-forged Damascus steel blade that was nickel-plated and blued. To see a mono-steel blade with a nickel plating and bluing is incredibly rare. However, to see a genuine Damascus blade enhanced with nickel plating and bluing, something that could make the fine Damascus pattern relatively indistinct, is unique. Either way it was so nicely executed here that it resulted in a composition showcasing the most skilled techniques of blade decorations of the period, a true presentational gift of a gentleman.

The grip of the dagger is made of hand-carved genuine ivory. All fittings are made of fire-gilded brass. The portepee is also of larger proportion, commensurate with the larger scale of the dagger.

Robert Zimmermann was born in Furness, England on February 7, 1883. His father was the naval architect Robert Zimmermann who designed, among many other things, German imperial torpedo boats. His father was married to a British woman, Margaret Eleanor Thompson.

Robert joined the Imperial navy in April 1900 and started his military career as a Seekadet on the German training ship SMS *Charlotte*. In the summer of 1900 she cruised in the Baltic and Norwegian seas.

On September 19 she commenced a longer voyage for crew training to the Mediterranean Sea during which she visited Moroccan ports, Corfu and Alexandria in Egypt. On December 17, the *Charlotte* received orders to head to Malaga for salvage operations on the sunken SMS *Gneisenau*, which had been wrecked during a storm while anchored there. The SMS *Charlotte* arrived at the Spanish port on December 22 to continue with the work that had already been started by the British ship HMS *Devastation*. Divers worked to recover the last of the dead bodies, secret documents and valuables from the wreckage. The salvage of *Gneisenau* was then briefly interrupted to transport Germany's Moroccan ambassador to Tangier from whence she returned to Malaga to complete the work on January 12. The *Charlotte* then visited Italian ports before returning to Kiel on March 9 of that year.

Zimmermann was promoted to Leutnant zur See on September 27, 1903. In 1905 we see him on the SMS *Friedrich Carl*, a ship that escorted the Kaiser on SMS *Hamburg* into the Mediterranean Sea from March until May of that year.

Zimmermann received his Oberleutnant zur See rank on March 30, 1906. Interestingly he served in 1910 as platoon leader in the IV Matrosenartillerieabteilung, stationed in Fort Grimmershörn, an artillery support fort for the Fort Kugelbake protecting the estuary of the river Elbe near Cuxhaven. When the First World War broke out he was first officer on SMS *Stettin*, a position he held until he left the ship in June 1916.

At the outbreak of the First World War in August 1914, SMS *Stettin* was serving in the North Sea with the High Seas Fleet. On August 6 she and the cruiser *Hamburg* escorted a flotilla of U-boats into the North Sea in an attempt to draw out the British fleet. The force returned to port on August 11, without having encountered any British warships. Some two weeks later on August 28, *Stettin* was involved in the battle of Heligoland Bight.

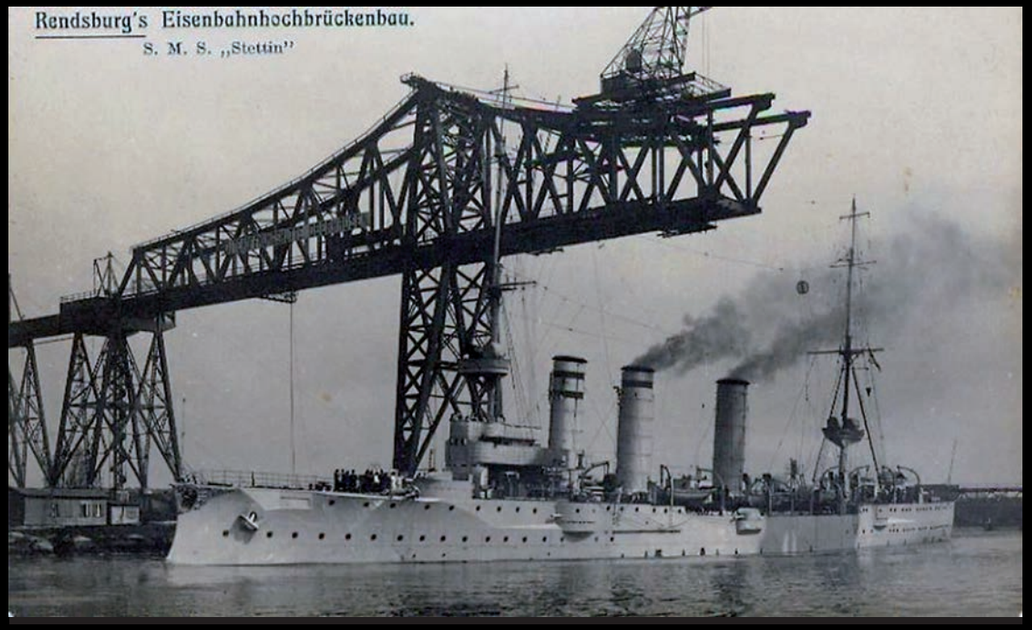
On May 7, 1915 the IV Scouting Group, which by then consisted of *Stettin*, *Stuttgart*, *München*, and *Danzig* and twenty-one torpedo boats was sent into the Baltic Sea to support a major operation against Russian positions at Libau. Rear Admiral Hopman, commander of the reconnaissance forces in the Baltic, commanded the operation. The IV Scouting Group was tasked with screening to the north to prevent any Russian naval forces from moving out of the Gulf of Finland undetected, while several armored cruisers and other warships bombarded the port. The Russians did attempt to intervene with a force of four cruisers: *Admiral Makarov*, *Bayan*, *Oleg*, and *Bogatyr*. The Russian ships briefly engaged *München*, but both sides were unsure of the other's strength and both disengaged. Shortly after the bombardment, the advancing German army captured Libau and *Stettin* and the rest of the IV Scouting Group were recalled to the High Seas Fleet.

In May 1916 the German fleet commander, Admiral Reinhard Scheer, planned a major operation to cut off and destroy an isolated squadron of the British fleet. The operation resulted in the battle of Jutland, May 31 to June 1, 1916. During the battle, *Stettin* served as the flagship of Commodore Ludwig von Reuter, the commander of the IV Scouting Group.

In June 1916 shortly after the battle of Jutland, Zimmermann was transferred as commanding officer to the torpedo boat D2 SMS *Alice Roosevelt*. In August 1918 he became intelligence officer of SMS *Von der Tann* and held this position until the scuttling of the imperial fleet in Scapa Flow.

Robert survived the war and was promoted to Korvettenkapitän in 1919. He emigrated to the United States and married Adelaide May Franz (1885–1981). Both were living in New Trier, Illinois in 1940. He passed away on April 29, 1985 in San Marino, California.

SMS Stettin under the Rendsburg bridge during the construction work



Imperial Naval Officer Dagger of Kapitänleutnant August Vollheim





Imperial Naval Officer Dagger of Kapitänleutnant Rudolf August Vollheim

August Vollheim was born on December 23, 1882 and entered the Imperial Navy in April 1901.

Promoted to Leutnant zur See on September 20, 1904, he served on SMS *Arcona* and *Hertha*. An interesting event took place while Vollheim sailed on *Hertha*.

On April 7, 1908 the *Hertha* was activated as a school ship. From June 6–11, she undertook a trip to Bornholm and Swinemünde with Prince Ludwig of Bavaria, the godfather of the ship, aboard. After a short visit to Bremerhaven, the *Hertha* embarked on its first long training voyage to Norwegian, Scottish and Irish waters where several ports were visited. Afterwards the voyage went on via Palma de Mallorca to Funchal and Las Palmas, followed by a tour of the Mediterranean, where Alexandria and several Italian ports were visited.

When the *Hertha* anchored in front of Corfu on December 30, 1908 to rendezvous with the SMS *Victoria Louise*, news reached the ship of an earthquake that had taken place two days earlier in the Messina Strait. The commander of the *Hertha*, Kapitän zur See Hugo Louran, coordinated the German aid response. Twenty tons of food, blankets, coats and other supplies were loaded and brought to Messina, where the *Hertha* arrived the following day. The *Victoria Louise* also loaded with supplies, followed two days later. Apart from the two German ships, six British, five Russian and a French, as well as a Danish war ship were involved in the rescue efforts.

As early as January 1, 1909, the cruiser *Hertha* brought 120 seriously injured victims of that earthquake to Naples. On January 2 the crew was occupied with the recovery of victims who had been buried alive as well as material from the destroyed German consulate. The aid and recovery effort, supported by the German merchant steamers *Bremen* and *Therapia* as well as the Hamburg rescue steamer *Salvator*, lasted until January 5.

From this day, the Italian authorities were able to organize the further rescue works by themselves and the foreign ships gradually ceased their engagement. The Italian Queen Margarethe visited *Hertha* personally and King Viktor Emanuel III mentioned the ship in his order of the day on January 5, where he expressed his thanks to the crew. Additionally, the Italian Fleet Association donated a commemorative plaque that was pinned to the cruiser. *Hertha* left Messina on the same day and returned to Corfu. For his personal part in the aid effort Vollheim received the Order of the Crown of Italy.

During the war Vollheim served as torpedo boat officer on *S-140* and commanded from June 1915 the torpedo boat *B-110*. He saw action on February 10, 1916 near Dogger Bank against two British ships and sunk HMS *Arabis*.

During the battle of Jutland the fire from HMS *Galatea* and HMS *Phaeton* against *B-110* opened the entire battle in which *B-110* fought with distinction.

In July 1917 Vollheim became commander of the 15th Torpedo Boat Half-flotilla. Vollheim survived the war and left the Imperial Navy in November 1919. He was promoted to Korvettenkapitän in February 1920.

Reactivated when the Second World War broke out, Vollheim became commanding officer of the U-boat shipyard in Brest, France in 1940. In the same year he was replaced by Vice-Admiral Stobwasser and became chief of staff of the base in Brest.

The dagger is a privately purchased example with an extra-cost hand-decorated scabbard and a fine Damascus steel blade in the maidenhair pattern.



SMS Hertha in Las Palmas Harbor



Evacuating victims of the earthquake in Naples



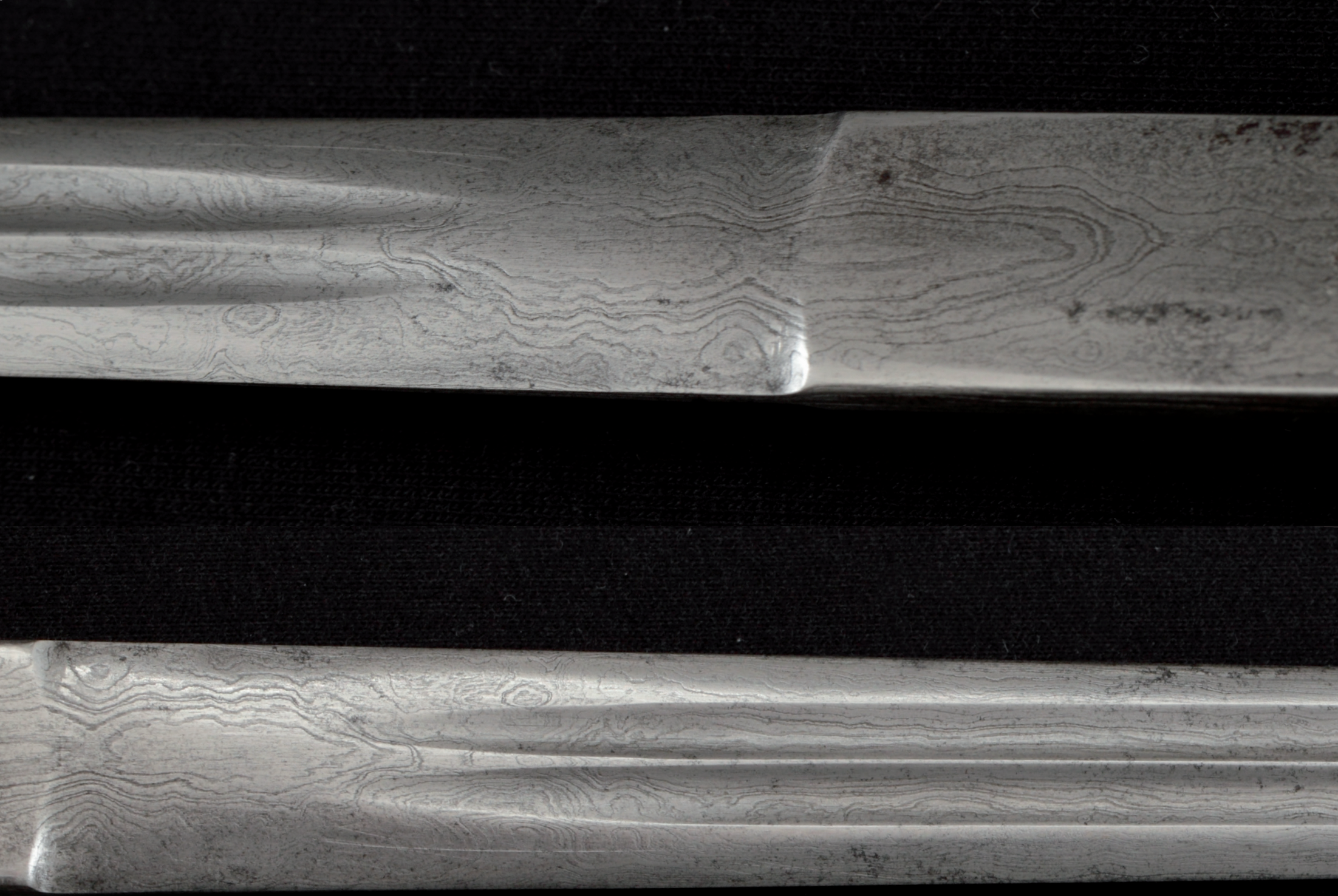
Torpedo destroyer B-110



Imperial Naval Officer Dagger of Fregattenkapitän Hans Roeder







Imperial Naval Officer Dagger of Fregattenkapitän Hans Roeder



Fregattenkapitän Hans Roeder, courtesy Thomas Gohlke

Born in Hamburg on September 8, 1888, Hans Roeder entered the Imperial Navy on April 1, 1906. As a cadet, he was assigned to the Ostseestation. He was trained until 1907 on the training ship SMS *Charlotte* and later in the Naval Academy, 1st Inspection, where he received special training until 1908.

Promoted to officer status, he served on SMS *Wettin* and *Thuringia*, followed by commissions to the 7th Torpedo Boat Flotilla and the 2nd Torpedo Boat Division.

At the outbreak of the Great War, Roeder served on the SMS *Elbing*. On this battleship he took part in the bombardment of the English east coast in April 1916 and the battle of Jutland. During this battle, his ship was accidentally rammed by SMS *Posen* at night. Due to the damage, the ship was abandoned and scuttled by the crew by exploding her ammunition stores. Hans Roeder went back to Germany via the Netherlands together with 18 men, another officer and the captain.

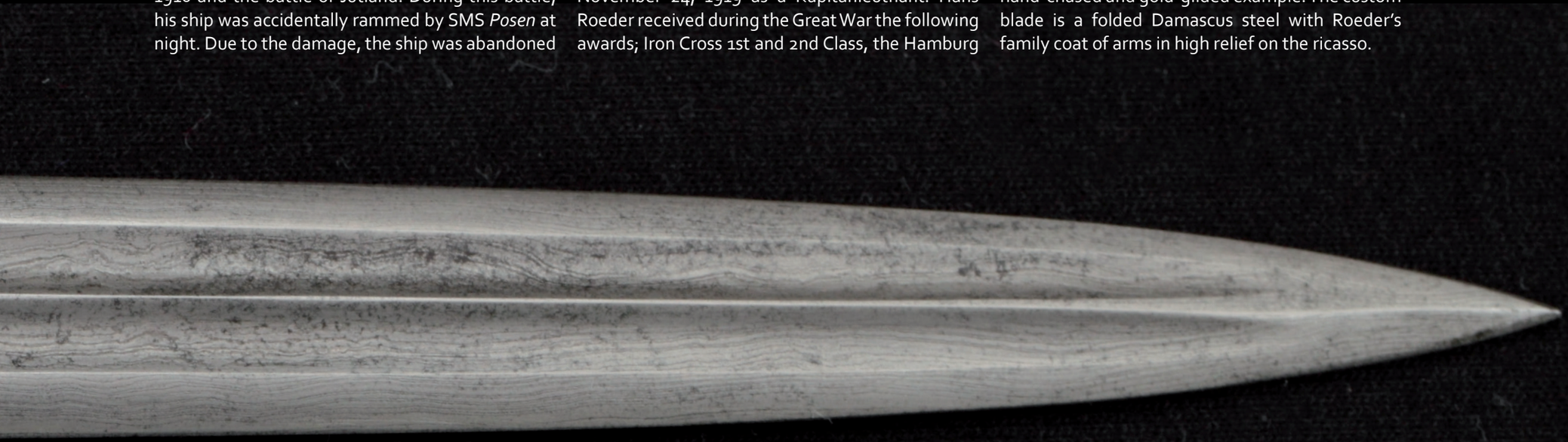
After his return to Germany, he was assigned to the U-boat school and was trained as a U-boat commander. He commanded the U-boats *UB-5*, *UB-25* and *U-97*. On March 13, 1917 *UB-25* was accidentally rammed by the torpedo boat *V-26* in the Bay of Kiel and sunk. One officer and 15 men were killed from a crew of 23.

Until the end of the war, Hans Roeder commanded the department of experimental torpedo weapons. He was discharged from the navy on November 24, 1919 as a Kapitänleutnant. Hans Roeder received during the Great War the following awards; Iron Cross 1st and 2nd Class, the Hamburg Hanseatic Cross and the Oldenburg Cross 2nd Class.

After the outbreak of the Second World War, he was reactivated as a Kapitänleutnant in the Kriegsmarine. He served in various positions including the High Command of the Kriegsmarine and as commander of the IV. MLA Wesermünde, the Naval Educational Department.

Hans Roeder witnessed the end of the war and was discharged after a short imprisonment in July 1945 as Fregattenkapitän.

His dagger is representative of an extra cost, deluxe officer dagger. The scabbard is a custom, hand-chased and gold-gilded example. The custom blade is a folded Damascus steel with Roeder's family coat of arms in high relief on the ricasso.







Imperial Naval Officer Dagger of Kapitänleutnant Heinrich Mathy





Imperial Naval Officer Dagger of Kapitänleutnant Heinrich Mathy

Before the First World War the German government and the Kaiser were convinced that they had achieved a strategic advantage against possible enemies with the help of Count Zeppelin and his airships. The somewhat second-class treatment of the air apparatus "heavier than air," which we today call airplanes as opposed to the light, gas-filled airship, led to an imbalance of power before the war in comparison to possible enemies like France, where aircraft development was much more advanced.

The situation was diffused somewhat through the efforts of Prince Heinrich, brother of the German Kaiser, who supported the air industry by appealing for funds for aircraft. However, the situation remained largely unchanged by the outbreak of war.



Mathy as a cadet

England, the leading naval power at that time, imposed a naval blockade against Germany at the beginning of the First World War in the summer of 1914. Germany could not counter this blockade, which later in the war led to to shortages in provisions, resulting in starvation amongst civilians.

Naval leaders had thought of reducing the "stranglehold" of the English blockade, inspired by the very capable commander of the naval airships Peter Strasser, by bombarding the English mainland with airships. His idea was to dishearten the enemy and convince the British to relax the blockade. The bombardment would cause civilian losses as had been inflicted by the naval blockade of Germany.

We know today that Strasser more or less "introduced" modern "total" air warfare especially against civilian targets. He opened a door to a hell that led to the Second World War fire bombings of Rotterdam, Hamburg, Dresden and many other cities up to and including Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Whether he could ever have envisaged such a development of his ideas is very unlikely.

For his attacks on England, Strasser also used one of his best and most loyal commanders, Heinrich Mathy. He and many other airship pilots were prepared to risk their lives attacking England. These attacks naturally resulted in many unfortunate victims. Women and children were killed on the mainland by these airships and not without reason, the airships became known as "baby-killers." Whether the bombers saw themselves this way is doubtful. The airship commanders saw that with the English naval blockade, their country was under threat. Civilians took second place. Their orders were to attack military targets. However, the airship crew spoke of a journey like a ship traveling in a blanket of cloud, with limited navigation technology, and all this at night.





The English were able to fire bullets at them when they finally reached their altitude but this initially had no effect. Only with the development of special incendiary ammunition designed to ignite the hydrogen gas cells was it possible, from 1916 onwards, to destroy the airships. This technical innovation by the British marked the end of airships as a means of bombarding the island and as a strategic weapon. At the same time however, Germany had been developing and deploying airships that could reach greater heights.

Heinrich Mathy was born on April 4, 1883 in Mannheim. He joined the Imperial Navy on April 7, 1900.

He was promoted to Leutnant on May 11, 1905. His spent time at sea on the SMS *Loreley* which lay anchored in Constantinople, today Istanbul, due to a contract agreement with the Sublime Court of the Ottoman Empire and European powers in 1856. Anchored as a marine station, it undertook journeys between the neighboring harbor cities. Her services to the German Reich were primarily of a representative nature.

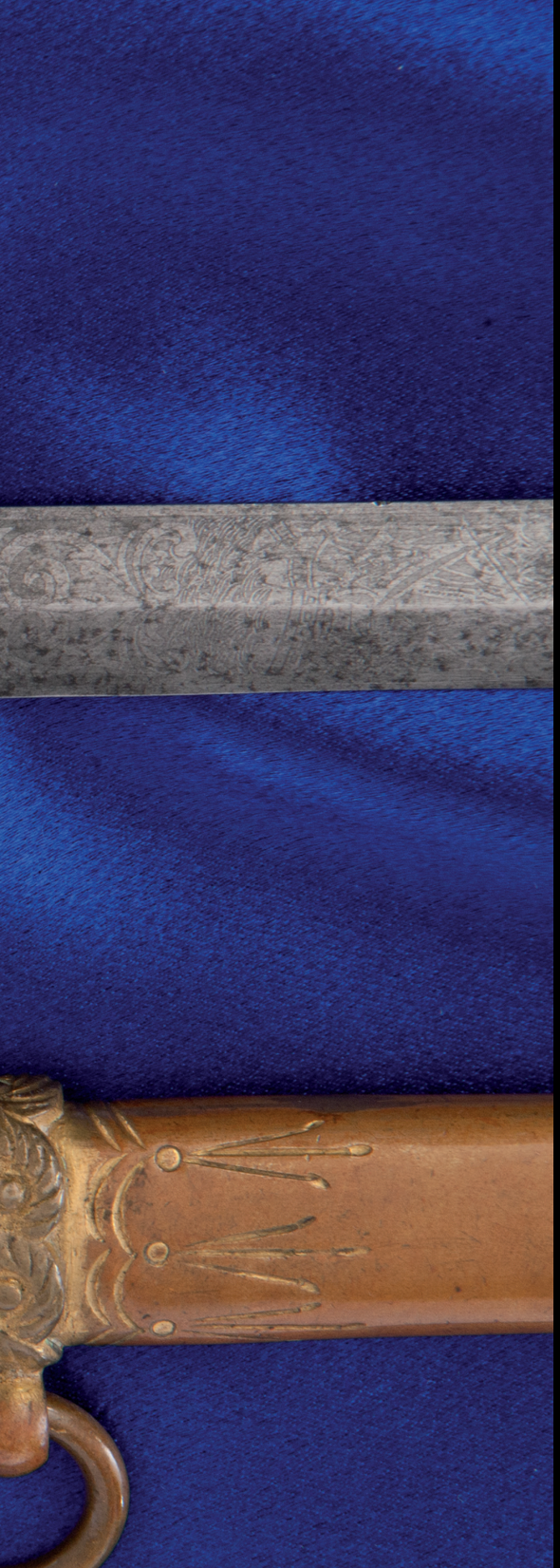
The SMS *Loreley* was made available to the German Crown Prince Wilhelm and his brother Prince Eitel Friedrich in April 1904 for their visit to the Sultan. On May 3, the ship docked in Alexandria, having come from Thessaloniki, as there was unrest in Macedonia. During the 50-year anniversary celebrations of the International Danube Commission in 1906, the *Loreley* was in the port of Galati. Later, Heinrich Mathy served on the torpedo boat *S119* where he was promoted to Kapitänleutnant on March 22, 1910.



Mathy during navigational training

He was subsequently transferred to the Naval Academy for training as a staff officer due to his excellent nautical skills and above all, knowledge of tactics. On October 1, 1912 he began his duty at the academy and stayed there for two years as an instructor. At Johannisthal, the airship base, he had his first opportunity to fly with one of Graf Zeppelin's airships, namely the L3, during the night of July 8–9, 1913. According to the logbook, the flight took 7 hrs 30 minutes and traveled over Neuruppin; a memorable experience for him, being able to devote himself to the tactical abilities of an airship in the context of war at sea. Detached from the academy, he experienced the brewings of war when assigned to the naval airship division for summer duty.

At the start of the war he was in charge of the major torpedo boat *S177*. Peter Strasser, commander of the airships and with whom he had friendly connections, transferred him back to the naval airships at the beginning of 1915. It was soon, in January, that Heinrich Mathy made his first attack against England aboard the airship L5. However, due to bad weather over the Channel this assault was aborted.



Further attacks were "successful", especially the one on London on September 8, 1915 with the airship L13, as was also the attack during the night of October 13/14 of that year. The attack on September 8, 1915 was the most devastating by a Zeppelin during the entire war. It brought a sixth of the total damage inflicted by German Zeppelins and the newly invented heavier-than-air bombers.

Despite civilian losses, Peter Strasser and his commanders assumed that the attacks on English targets would force the enemy to toughen defenses on the English mainland thereby utilizing resources and men that would otherwise be deployed to the Western Front at Flanders and around Ypres, Belgium. Further strikes followed in January and March 1916 on Ipswich, London and the Tynemouth area.

In the summer of 1916, Heinrich Mathy received the command of the new and larger airship L31, with which he would undertake more attacks on the city of London.

During the night of August 24/25, 1916, he attacked London again, causing severe damage and fires. Back at home base he received the news that an airship had been brought down by the British using incendiary rounds. As airships were more often being set on fire and destroyed this way, it was clear to most people involved that the time of the airship assault was over.

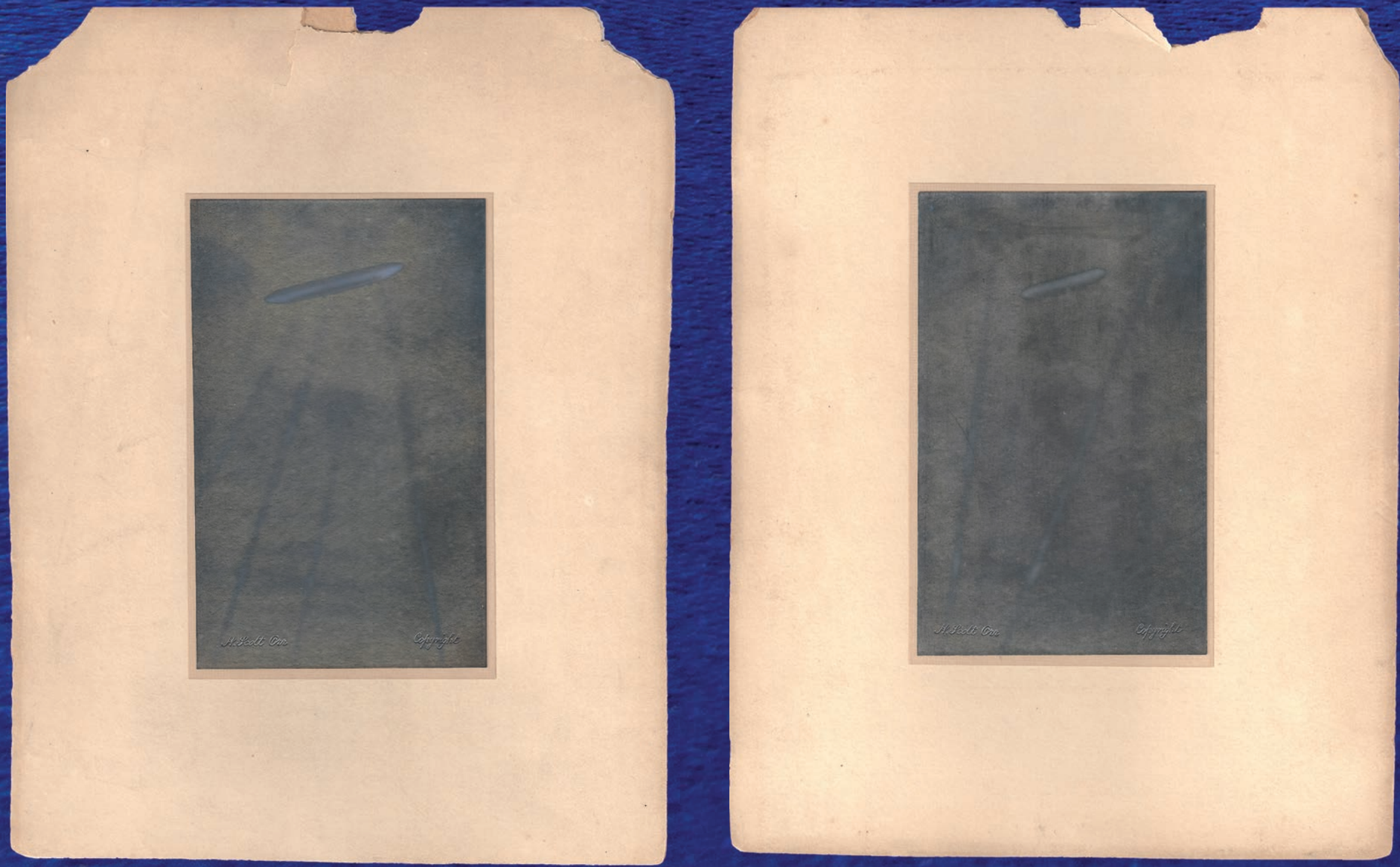
Mathy and his crew's luck ran out during the night of October 1/2, 1916. At the height of 4800m the British pilot W. J. Tempest shot the L31 resulting in it burning to the ground. It crashed just outside the village of Potters Bar, to the north of London.

Faced with the terrible choice of either burning to death or to jump, only a few decided to jump. It appears that Mathy chose to jump, but before doing so he had explained their fate to his crew, who apparently understood. Mathy and his crew were buried with full military honors by the British.

In the early 1960s, the bodies of the crew were transferred to Cannock Chase in Staffordshire, a cemetery where all who were shot down over England in both world wars are buried.

This is a standard 1890 pattern cadet dagger with an ivory grip and etched plated blade.


Mallay



Original photos of the downfall of the Zeppelin over Potters Bar






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Imperial Naval Officer Dagger of Korvettenkapitän Wilhelm Rebensburg





Imperial Navy Officer Dagger of Korvettenkapitän Wilhelm Rebensburg

This naval officer dagger , manufactured under the provisions of 1901, was worn by Korvettenkapitän Wilhelm Rebensburg.

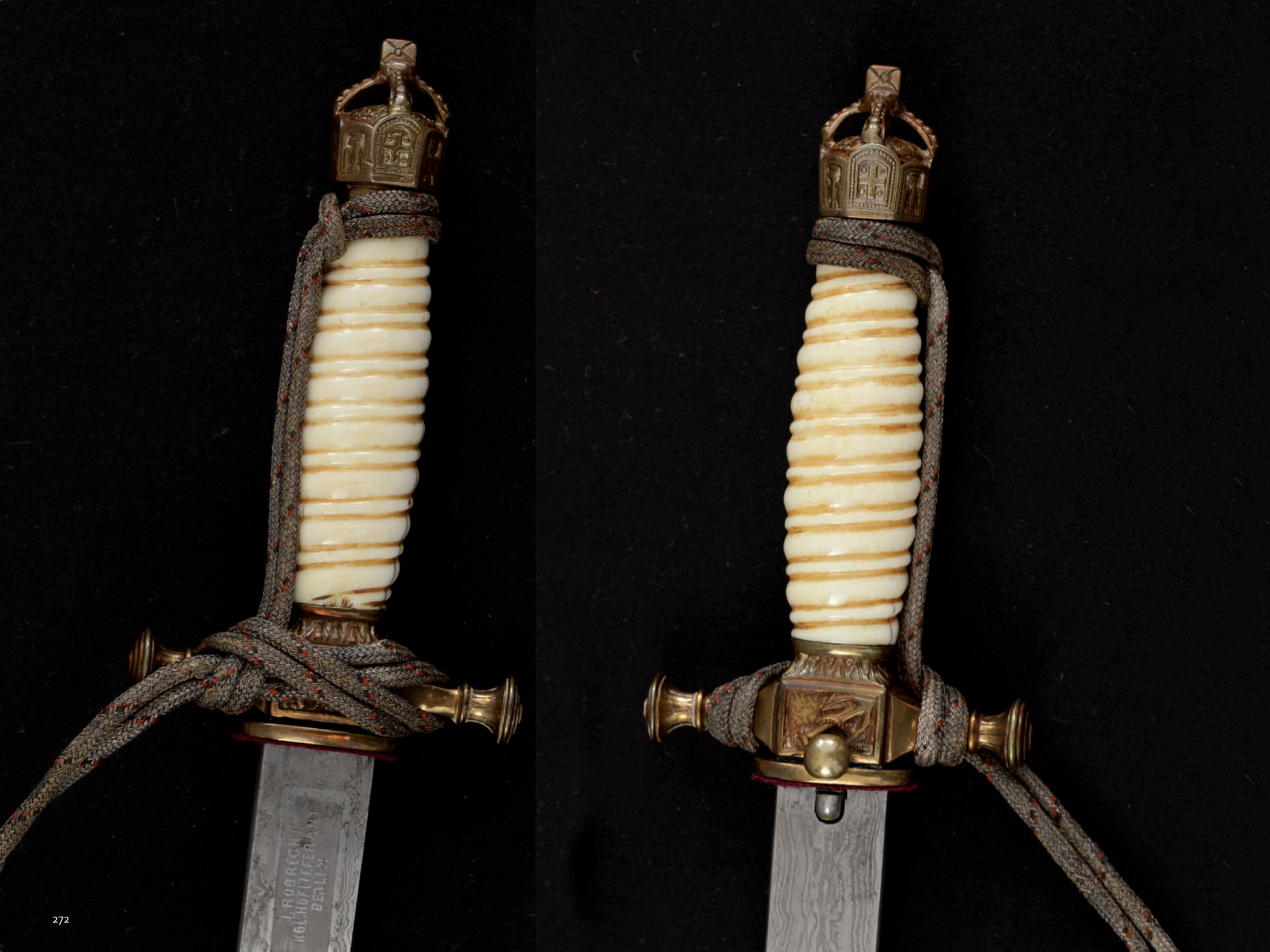
Wilhelm Rebensburg was born on February 4, 1883 in Braunfels and entered the navy in April 1901. He served on the torpedo boats *T102* and *S124* of the Coastal Division of the Baltic Sea. In September 1914 he took over as commander of the torpedo boat *G135*. In April 1915 he became chief of the 19th Torpedo Boat Flotilla in Liebau, and in November 1917 became an Admiral staff officer in command of the Baltic Sea. He survived the First World War and retired on November 22, 1919 from active service. On April 2, 1920 he was promoted to Korvettenkapitän.

Remarkably, when examining this dagger it is immediately visible that the name of the supplier was etched on the ricasso. The Robrecht Company was established in Berlin on the grounds of Hildebrandstraße 5 in a house in which today houses the Embassy of Estonia. The Robrecht family also owned a huge feudal estate in Silesia, the Meffersdorf manor.

Produced around 1906, the crown, cross guard and scabbard of this dagger is made of gilded brass. The hilt is fitted with a genuine ivory grip. Interestingly, the grip has been produced with a double groove design. The toning of the ivory makes one think that originally the grip was wire wrapped. However, this was not the case. Collectors will not often see such hand-cut grooves on Navy daggers of the imperial era. The grip is reminiscent of the 1848 pattern dagger. The blade is of high-quality, hand-forged Damascus steel in the so-called "maiden hair" pattern. American collectors have long favored this description because the pattern is reminiscent of long flowing hair of a young woman.

Torpedo boat in action




J. ROBRECHT
KGL. HOFLIEFERANT
BERLIN


I. ROBRECHT
KGL. HOFLIEFERANT
BERLIN

Deluxe Imperial Naval Officer Dagger







Deluxe Imperial Naval Officer Dagger with rare Blued Blade

In the imperial period daggers regulated for naval officers were basically the same size as the long 1890 pattern cadet daggers. However, collectors will often find shorter daggers from that period, as many officers preferred them. The difference by regulation was that the officer dagger had a crown with open arches and grip wire.

This dagger is for naval officers per 1901 regulations, but is a luxury version. It is not a "Schwerer Dolch" or "Heavy" Dagger, but is of somewhat larger proportions.

Many hand-applied enhancements to the scabbard and an interesting monosteel blade are key deluxe features of the dagger. The entire blade was nickel-plated and the normally relatively indistinct etched decoration was blued, a technique rarely applied to daggers. It provides the blade with a stunning effect. The decoration is more impressive and easier to distinguish, highlighting the maritime motifs.

The manufacturer appears to be the Carl Kaiser Company, a producer going out of business in 1905 and well known for the premium quality of its daggers.

This is a scarce and desirable weapon, even without it being personalized.













Imperial Navy Deluxe Officer Dagger







This deluxe officer dagger was produced by the manufacturer Weyersberg, Kirschbaum & Co. It features a Damascus steel blade hand-forged by the most famous swordsmith of the period, Max Dinger. The blade tang is stamped with M+D, the signature Max Dinger used to denote his work. The ornate, custom, hand-chased scabbard is gold-gilded and bears the initials of the original owner in medallions on each side. Unfortunately, the initials alone are not enough information to unequivocally identify its owner. The cross guard and open-crown pommel are heavily gold fire-gilded. The wire-wrapped grip is hand-turned genuine ivory.







Imperial Navy Miniatures





Imperial Navy Miniature Daggers

Miniature daggers were produced during the period to be presented as gifts or advertising premiums. The examples shown are typical of the period. They were used as desk sets or letter openers and are occasionally found mounted to a cast iron or marble paperweight. They came in a vast variety of types and scales ranging from small inexpensive watch fobs to larger-scale, custom-made presentation examples that are of the same outstanding quality and detail as their full-scale counterparts. Long model 1890 Pattern and the shorter 1901 Pattern officer models are frequently seen. Fittings are of gilded brass with celluloid grips. Genuine ivory and mother of pearl grips are occasionally encountered as well. Blades are typically unadorned nickel-plated steel. However, custom orders could include hand-chased scabbards and Damascus or etched blades.



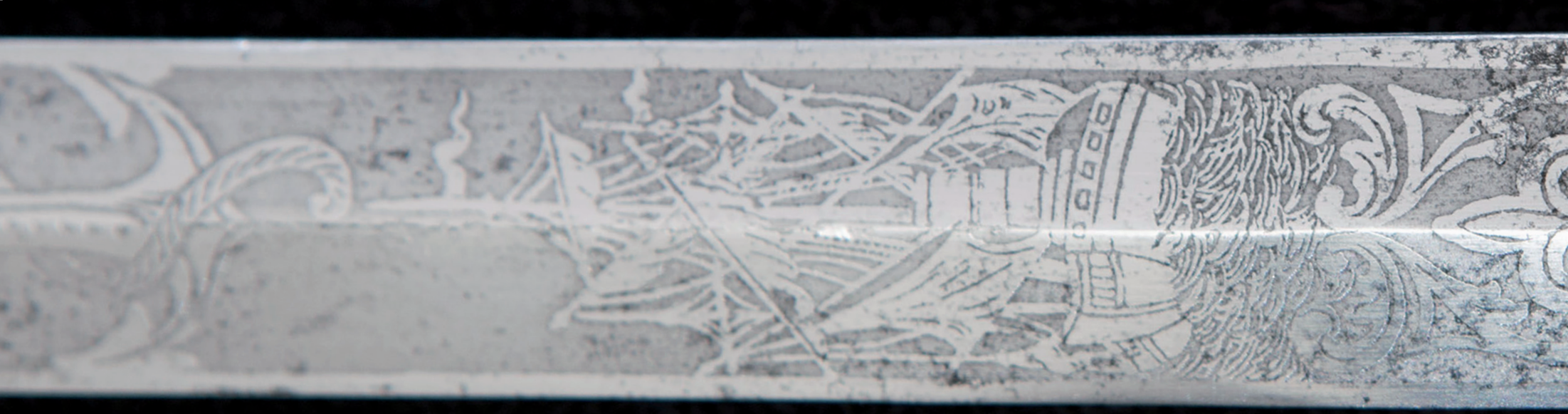

H. PENNER



Imperial Naval Dagger of Generalleutnant Otto Lancelle




Sancelle



Imperial Naval Dagger of Generalleutnant Otto Quirin Lancelle

This is an 1890 pattern dagger of the Imperial German Navy for wearing by officer cadets. Otto Lancelle was born on March 27, 1885 in Xanten on the Lower Rhine. He entered the Imperial German Navy as a cadet on April 1, 1905. For unknown reasons he transferred to the Army on December 11, 1905. From his later career, we may speculate that perhaps it was due to an extraordinary aptitude for gunnery.

For the next 6 years Lancelle served as a Leutnant in the 43rd Field Artillery Regiment. In 1912 he was transferred to the Instruction Regiment of the Field Artillery Firing School at Jüterbog. He was promoted to Oberleutnant on July 8, 1914 just prior to leaving the Instruction Regiment on August 2.

His military service in the First World War started with the 6th Guards Artillery Regiment where he was promoted to Hauptman on April 3, 1915. He remained with the 6th leading various platoons and was twice wounded in 1915. The first occasion was a wound to the left shoulder on July 22 near Milany during the battle of Róznan. He was again wounded in the left arm on August 5 at the battle of the River Orz, also in Poland.

From December 1915 to February 1917 Lancelle commanded the 1st Battalion of the 5th Foot Guards, Field Artillery Regiment on the Eastern Front. After this command he was appointed as Staff Officer of Artillery with the 1st Army where he was also for a time on the construction staff of the Siegfried Line and the Director of the Tank Defense School of the 1st Army, a position he held until June 1918. From June 1918 until May 1919 he was a battalion commander of the 2nd Guards Field Artillery Regiment. It was while he was commander of the 2nd Guards that he was awarded the Pour Le Mérite on October 9, 1918.

From May to July 1919 Lancelle was involved in the relief of Munich following suppression of the communist uprising. He then held command of 26th Reichswehr Artillery Regiment until being transferred back to the Instruction Regiment of the Artillery School. From October 1919 Lancelle became an active member of the Border Protection Freikorps of Upper Silesia and was granted conditional leave from the Army for refusing to swear allegiance to the Weimar Government. He was subsequently retired from the Army on March 31, 1920.

During the interwar years Otto Lancelle was a prominent figure in various infamous organizations. He was a joint founder of the Stahlhelm and a member of Ortsgruppe Eilenberg between 1920 and 1924. He was also involved with the Hitler Putsch in Munich on November 9, 1923. In 1924 he withdrew from the Stahlhelm and entered the Frontbann and was an active representative of the "Frontbann Group Center" to the NSDAP, with which he was greatly involved.

He was appointed to the rank of Standartenführer to the staff of the Supreme SA Leadership in 1931 and subsequently promoted to SA Oberführer in February 1932. Between 1932 and 1935 Otto Lancelle was a prominent personality in the Reich Labor services. First he served in the voluntary DAF as Director of the first Reich School of Labor Services. Thereafter he served in the RAD with the high rank of Obergeneralarbeitsführer.

On October 1, 1935 Otto Lancelle resumed his military career when he was recommissioned back to army service at the rank of Major. He voluntarily resigned his rank with the SA on April 1, 1936.

From the time of recommencing his active service with the German Army, Lancelle was on the staff of the 7th Artillery Regiment until April 1938 and commander of various artillery regiments. He was subsequently appointed divisional commander of the 121st Infantry Division on May 6, 1941. He was to become the first high-ranking German officer to be killed on the Eastern Front when a Soviet sniper shot him on July 3, 1941.

His promotions after resuming his career as a Major in 1935 were as follows: Oberstleutnant (20 Apr 1936); Oberst (01 Jan 1939); Generalmajor (01 Feb 1941); Generalleutnant (posthumous) (21 Jul 1941).

There were only 18 other people awarded the Pour le Mérite and The Knight's Cross, most famously Herman Goering, Erwin Rommel and Ernst Udet.

The Kölnische Illustrierte Zeitung of November 4, 1943 provides additional information regarding Otto Lancelle. The Polish town of Rzgow was renamed Lancellenstädt to commemorate the German Army General and Division Commander, Otto Quirin-Lancelle.



Imperial Naval Engineer Dress Bayonet of Walter Thienemann




S./1. M. Thienemann z. Erinnerung A. Reeder.



Imperial Naval Engineer Dress Bayonet of Leutnant Walter Thienemann

This is the deluxe engineer dress bayonet of Leutnant Engineer Walter Thienemann, who was born September 9, 1887 and entered the Imperial Navy in October 1907. By the beginning of the First World War, he was serving as an engineer aboard the old pre-dreadnought battleship SMS *Kaiser Friedrich III*. The ship was assigned to patrol the North Sea approaches until March 1915 when it was deactivated from front-line duty. Thienemann then attended torpedo boat school and went on to serve aboard torpedo boats *S49* and *S132* receiving a promotion to Leutnant Engineer on January 27, 1917. He later served aboard *V100* until the end of the war. He left the Navy in August 1920.

This deluxe dress bayonet is the epitome of a special order sidearm. The entire hilt as well as scabbard fittings are fire gilt and elaborately hand chased with oak leaves over fish scales. The heraldic crown of the Imperial German Empire forms the pommel that secures the blade to the hilt. The quillion block features a fouled anchor overlain by a cogged wheel. The cogged wheel is the symbol of the engineering corps in the Imperial German Navy.

The deluxe plated blade bears two presentations highlighted in gold over a blued background. On the obverse over a dreadnought battleship the inscription reads "To my dear Walter Thienemann in remembrance, A. Reeder." Arnholt Reeder was an Oberleutnant Engineer and was at the torpedo boat school at the same time as Walter Thienemann. It is likely there where they became close friends. On the reverse above a sailing ship reads a popular slogan of the time found on imperial edged weapons. Loosely translated it means "Draw me not without justice, wield me not without honor." Clearly this was a befitting gift from one dear friend to another. It was common among officers in the German military to convey gifts to one another in esteemed admiration.


Ziehe mich nicht ohne Grund
Stecke mich nicht ein ohne Ehre.




S/A. W. Thienemann
Ziehe mich nicht ohne
Stecke mich nicht ein oh


Erinnerung A. Reeder.
Grund
ne Ehre.


ht ohne Grund
cht ein ohne Ehre.



Deluxe Imperial Naval Officer "Heavy" Dagger







Deluxe Imperial Naval Officer "Heavy" Dagger

The elaborate and extremely rare 1901 pattern Deluxe "Heavy" Imperial Navy officer dagger was the epitome of the fine art of edged-weapon production in Solingen, Germany during the period. It combined the finest artistry and craftsmanship available to produce singular works of art. The size of these pieces is significantly greater than that of a regulation dagger. Finely made, elaborately hand-chased scabbards in the repoussé style were typical. Blades ranged from etched nickel-plated steel to custom-made Damascus blades with gilded and blued highlights and dedications. Grips were invariably genuine ivory. Most examples are personalized to the owner and the coat of arms of aristocracy is occasionally encountered. These magnificent custom, special order pieces were very dear at the time and remain so today. Only a few are known to exist.

The example shown was produced by Weyersberg, Kirschbaum & Co. in about 1900. It is shown in their period catalog as Model No. 45, scabbard style 3. This hand-chased scabbard features a nautical motif as does the etched nickel-plated dual fuller blade. This is the only dagger the authors have seen that shows a detailed three-mast square sail ship under full sail etched on a navy blade. The cross guard is a massive capstan style conforming to period regulations. The open crown pommel is equally large and finely hand chiseled. All fittings including the scabbard are heavily fire-gilded. The only information as to the original owner of this magnificent example is the intertwined initials "EJ" jeweler engraved on the scabbard reverse. Research continues as to the owner of this fine example.











Imperial Naval Officer Dagger of Konteradmiral Erich Heyden



Imperial Naval Officer Dagger of Konteradmiral Erich Heyden

Erich Heyden was born September 24, 1879, in the Silesian town of Greiffenberg, which today is the Polish town Gryfów Śląski.

Heyden entered the Navy as a Kadett and attended basic training for one year aboard the training ship *Stosch* beginning April 12, 1898. He departed for East Asia on October 22, 1900 and served on the SMS *Brandenburg* from December 10, 1900 until September 22, 1901. Heyden returned to Bremerhaven aboard the SMS *Brandenburg* in August 1901.

From October 1, 1902 until September 30, 1903 Heyden served on torpedo boat *S 92* and *S 103* as watch officer. He was promoted to Leutnant zur See on September 30, 1901.

Torpedo boats were a relatively new development before the outbreak of the First World War. With the introduction of the propelled torpedo in 1866 by Robert Whitehead, the effectiveness of small and fast torpedo armed boats was recognized. The cheap and easy-to-use torpedo was able to destroy much larger battleships. The torpedo therefore forever changed marine warfare. Officers with particular expertise on the deployment of this new weapon system were highly trained professionals.

Heyden went through advanced training from October 1, 1903 until March 27, 1904 and became Commander of the torpedo boat *S 17* from March 28, 1904 until July 19, 1904. He later went on to command the torpedo boat *S 12* from July until September 1904. As an expert in torpedo boats, he was commander of a training torpedo boat in the II. Torpedo Division from October 1906 until April 1909. He was promoted to the rank of Kapitänleutnant on March 30, 1908.

Heyden departed for Tsingtao, China on April 24, 1909 and became commander of the torpedo boat *S 90*, one of the German ships securing the Yangtzekiang River delta for the German Reich with the infamous gunboat-diplomacy following the Chinese Boxer Rebellion. Heyden traveled home from Tsingtao between May and July 1911 and was detached to the II. Sailor-Division.



SMS Hindenburg

Between September 1911 and the end of September 1913 Heyden served as assistant in torpedo affairs in the Imperial Shipyard in Wilhelmshaven, and later became head of the Imperial Torpedo Acceptance Commission until the end of January 1917.

Heyden's career took a slightly different path requiring broader leadership and administrative skills when he was assigned as chief of the Outpost Flotilla of the river Ems on January 30, 1917. He also served as commander of the light cruiser SMS *Arcona* from the end of July 1917 until February 1918. The SMS *Arcona* was the lead ship of the Ems River coastal protection forces. Until near the end of the First World War he commanded the submarine escort flotilla of the Ems river, a unit responsible to escort and protect Imperial German ships and U-boats from the coast to open waters, while clearing minefields. Heyden led these units from February 22, 1918 until August 30, 1918.

Shortly after the end of the war Erich Heyden became commander of the SMS *Hindenburg*, one of the most modern German heavy cruisers. Built in 1915, this ship arrived too late to participate in the largest sea battles of the First World War.

When hostilities ended on the Western Front on November 11, 1918, nearly the entire German High Sea Fleet was still extant. Undefeated by the English, the fleet was commanded to surrender to the British at Scapa Flow in the Orkney Islands, whereby all these proud ships were interred on November 21, 1918. Realizing that the Entente would never give back the ships to any German government, Admiral von Reuter, the German commander of the surrendered German fleet, gave the order on June 21, 1919 to scuttle all vessels. This final act of defiance is deeply engraved into German history. It was SMS *Hindenburg*'s fate to be destroyed at the hands of her own crew at Scapa Flow on that remarkable day.

After the scuttling the German crews and their officers were sent home. Most of them retired from the Imperial Navy. This was not the case for highly experienced experts like Heyden. Because of his experience and expertise he was promoted to director of the equipment and torpedo department of the naval shipyard Wilhelmshaven, where he served for two years. In September 1922 he was appointed to Commandant of the cruiser *Hamburg* where he served until the end of September 1924. Between 1924 and 1928 he became chief of the naval officers personnel department. This was an important position because at that time every officer was carefully selected by hand because of

the Versailles Treaty restrictions. Heyden retired at the end of November 1928 with the promotion to Konteradmiral.

With the outbreak of the Second World War, he was called back to service and placed at the disposal of the High Command of the Kriegsmarine. At the end of April 1940 he was installed as senior shipyard director of the Kriegsmarine in Horten, Norway, where he served until the end of May 1943.

Heyden retired after a long and distinguished career on June 30, 1943. He died January 11, 1948 in Berlin.



SMS Hamburg

The Erich Heyden dagger is an interesting artifact. Obviously worn through many years on a daily basis, the dagger started early life as an 1890 pattern cadet dagger. Shortly after his promotion to Leutnant zur See in 1901, he just shortened the longer blade, interestingly un-adorned by the imperial crown, and purchased another ivory grip and dagger fittings, according to officer pattern standards. He also added a hand-engraved scabbard made by the Carl Kaiser Company, a high-quality producer that ceased to exist in 1905.


E. Heyden



Imperial Naval Officer Dagger of Kapitänleutnant Hans Scharlau





Imperial Navy Officer Dagger of Kapitänleutnant Hans Scharlau

Hans Scharlau was born on March 25, 1889. In April 1907 he joined the Imperial Navy.

In the beginning of the First World War he served on the patrol-boat *D*. Later he became the group leader of the patrol-boats in the North Sea. Patrol-boats were oceangoing vessels and former trawlers. Their task was to detect approaching enemy ships and U-boats and report them to larger fighting units. They had to lay mines and clear enemy minefields as well as guard outgoing German U-boats and larger ships. They were lightly armed and were often requisitioned civilian ships. It was hard work, but important to naval warfare in both world wars.

At the outbreak of the First World War, the Imperial Navy had no experience in the use of trawlers as patrol-boats or for mine operations. During the war 34 new orders for Vorpostenboote were made by the Imperial Navy itself and 145 were ordered externally.

In August 1915, the VP-boats were equipped with one or two torpedo tubes for anti-submarine warfare. All new VP-boats were former trawlers that were extensively modified for military usage. The storage space for fish was used for crew accommodation, ammunition chambers and gun carriages.

During the First World War, 63 German boats were lost because of enemy action, including 33 by mines. For most of these boats not even the names of the commanding officers are known today. This is remarkable because their service secured the North and Baltic Seas for the Imperial Fleet around the clock and in all weather conditions. The sailors went out during snow, rain and in summer heat. They faced enemy mines, aircrafts and well-armed ships to fulfill their duties to guard German U-boats and secure German waters. This is an unwritten heroic story of the Great War.

In 1916 Scharlau wrote a manuscript on the use of patrol-boats but due to paper shortages it was not printed. Interestingly, important publishers like Ullstein preferred unrealistic novels about U-boat warfare for young German readers. Therefore, important information about a key naval tactics was lost to the German Kriegsmarine when the Second World War broke out.

In April 1917 he became first watch-officer on SMS *Derfflinger*, where he was promoted to the rank of Kapitänleutnant in February 1918. In November 1919 he was decommissioned from the service.

In the 1930s, Scharlau worked for the Telefunken and had numerous international patents for radio and navigation equipment. Most likely during the Second World War he worked for the German Kriegsmarine as a civilian specialist. The date of his death is unknown to the authors.

His dagger is a short dagger for officers. Regulations actually stipulated a dagger the same length as the daggers of cadets but with an open-arches crown pommel. Naval officers were obliged to acquire their own equipment, so they often chose a shorter version of the dagger, frequently with elaborate ornamentation and blades.

The blade is made of folded Damascus steel forged by the famous blacksmith Max Dinger. The manufacturer mark of the company Weyersberg, Kirschbaum & Co. is the small knight helmet version that was used until approximately 1910, the year Max Dinger died.

As with all imperial daggers for naval officers and cadets, the grip is carved of genuine ivory. Fittings and the customized scabbard are made of gilded brass.





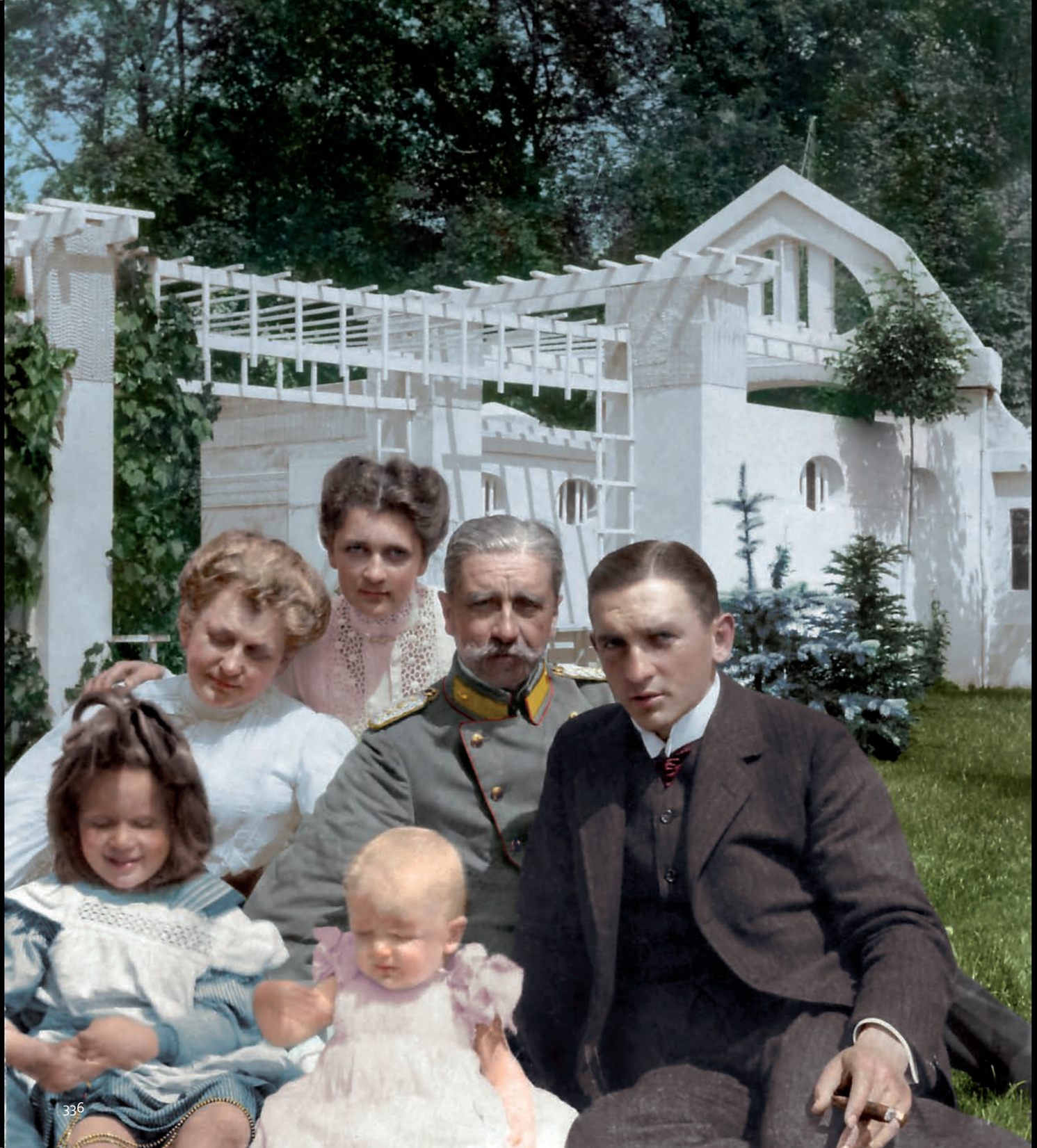






Imperial Naval Officer Dagger of Kapitänleutnant Curt Willich







German propaganda poster from 1917

Curt Willich with his parents and family

Imperial Naval Officer Dagger of Kapitänleutnant Curt Willich



Curt Willich was born on June 25, 1885 in Kassel. He joined the Imperial Navy on April 1, 1905.

His first years of duty were served on the school ship SMS *Stein*. Curt Willich was of the same generation and a shipmate of the later Admiral Wilhelm Canaris. On September 28, 1908 he became an officer and on this day received his naval officer's dagger from his father.

In 1911 he served on the turbine torpedo boat *G 137*. Up to the outbreak of the First World War he served as watch and torpedo officer on the SMS *Lothringen*, SMS *Yorck*, in the third torpedo boat fleet as well as on the SMS *König Wilhelm* and the SMS *Hansa*. In the first two years of the war he also served on the battle ship SMS *Großer Fürst*.

Unrestricted submarine warfare had not yet been declared but, as a strategic option it was quite definitely on the tables of the Admiralty and in the minds of politicians. Accordingly, experienced officers were introduced to the submarine. Curt Willich was one of these officers and in 1915 he was sent to the submarine training center.

As a well-trained submarine officer, he took over the command of the *SM-U3* training submarine in 1916. This was a pre-war boat. Powered by kerosene, it was one of the armed submarines.

Submarine technology was not highly developed at the time of *U-3* being put into service. The kerosene-driven submersible boats, we can hardly speak of submarines, were a mixture of heat, intoxicating fumes and fear amongst the crew. Only with later designs was it possible for the German U-boat commanders to be able to make attacks on the open seas, travel across water on diesel-driven journeys and have batteries to submerge.

Curt Willich became an instructor at the submarine training center in Eckernförde, near Kiel, after his command on the *U-3*. However, he left the school on August 15, 1916 to take over command of the newly commissioned submarine *UC-24*.

Europe was divided rather differently in 1916 compared with today. The Austrian-Hungarian double-monarchy, the remains of which we now know as Austria, had a navy and an important naval base on the Adriatic coast at Pula in what is today Croatia. From here German and Austrian marine forces operated in the Adriatic and Mediterranean Seas.

The submarine *UC-24* was transferred to Pula in August 1916 having been disassembled and transported by rail from Germany. The mission of *UC-24* was to lay mines in the Adriatic Sea. As the *UC-24* was armed with torpedoes. It also had orders to attack enemy and neutral ships that were assumed to be supplying reinforcements to the Italian opposition.

The first "hits" came soon. Shortly after re-assembly, test trials and in running order again, the *UC-24* sank the Norwegian freighter *Solbakken* on February 24, 1917. Two days later two more Norwegian freighters were destroyed, the *Ellavore* and *Havgard*. It was possible at that time for Germany's enemies to charter Norwegian ships, load them with war material and put them into action. Norway was a neutral ally of the Entente.

On July 11, 1917 the Italian ship *Siracusa*, sank after hitting a mine laid by *UC-24*. By this time the *UC-24* and many of the crew had already become casualties of the war.

Present-day Montenegro and the port of Kotor belonged to the imperial and royal double-monarchy of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. This was known as the crown estate Dalmatia. The port of Kotor, or Cattaro, served as a further military base for *UC-24*. On the morning of May 24, 1917 the *UC-24* departed again from this military base under the command of Curt Willich.

After the cold winter spell of 1917, the weather in May in the Adriatic was still cool and the sky cloudy. Not far from the port exit laid the submerged French submarine *Circé* ready to attack, at periscope depth. In the late afternoon the surfacing *UC-24* under Commander Willich was torpedoed and sunk by the *Circé*. Only two crew members from the bridge could escape the inferno. All the others, including Commander Willich, sank into the dephts of the Adriatic. It was one of the first sinkings in history of two enemy fighting submarines.

Today the *UC-24* lies with its commander and comrades at position 42°06'N 18° 09'E.







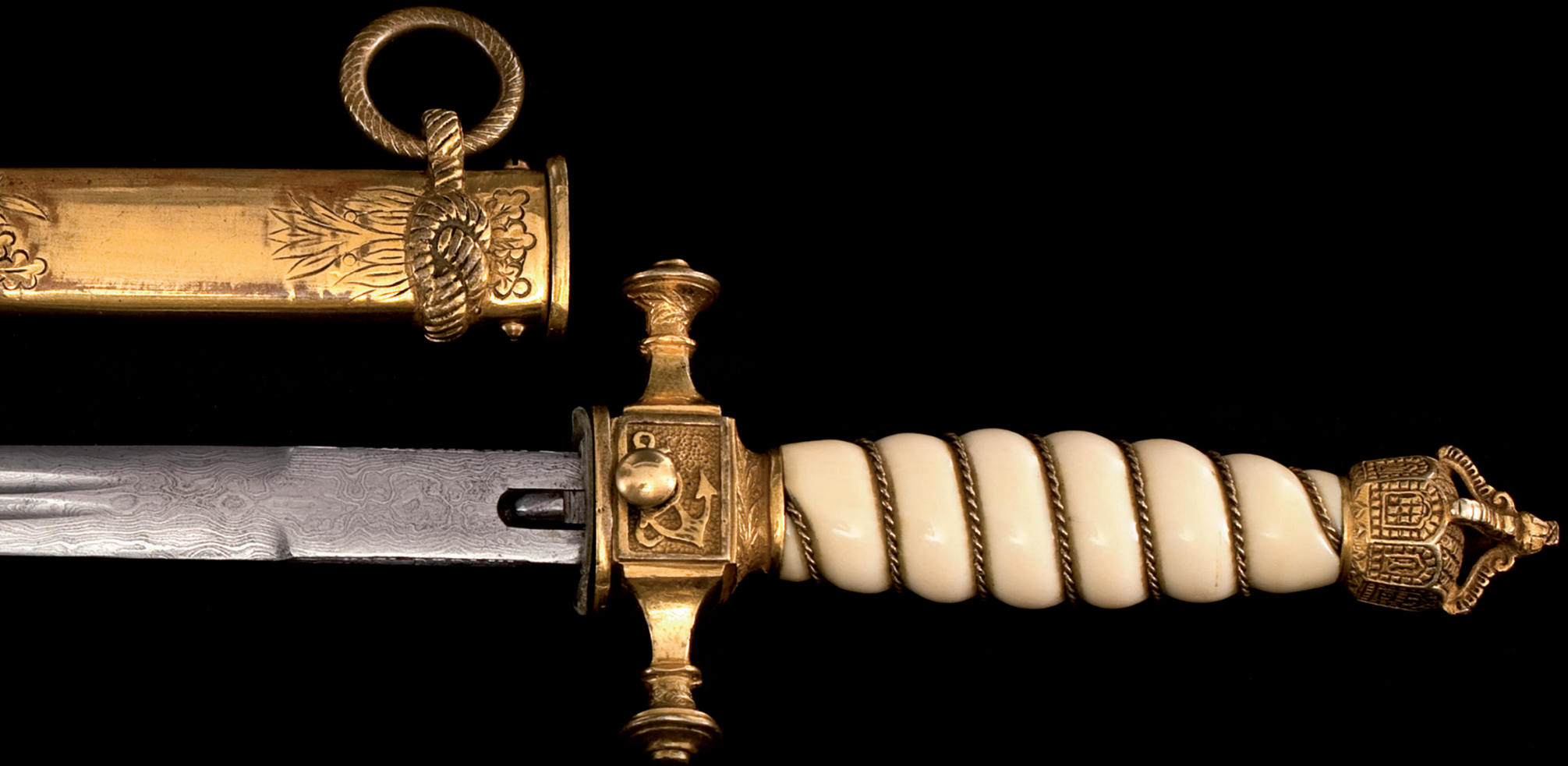
Curt Willich with his wife Erna Goldschmidt





Curt Willich on the right,
later Admiral Raeder second row on the right


28. Septembre 1908.












Klitzsch
Ernst Klitzsch Solingen Klitzsch



Willich second from left





Blade retailer

Deluxe Imperial Naval Officer "Heavy" Dagger of Franz Geerdtz













Geerdtz, third from left

courtesy Tobias Weber, www.buddecke.de

Imperial Naval Officer "Heavy" Dagger of Franz Geerdtz

Franz Geerdtz's cumbersome dagger is an exceptional example of a large deluxe navy dagger. Only limited numbers of these were produced between 1895 and the beginning of the First World War. Franz Geerdtz purchased the dagger, illustrated here, privately in 1896. Daggers like this were very expensive and in general only made especially for someone by request.

Franz Geerdtz's military career is remarkable. He joined the Navy on April 2, 1895. As a naval trainee he served on the SMS *Stein* from May 19, 1895 to March 1896. During this time he went on service-duty to the West Indies. On April 13, 1896 Geerdtz became a naval cadet. He served as an officer from the summer of 1896 until the end of the year with the Imperial Navy on overseas voyages to Caracas, Venezuela and other locations. He returned with SMS *Stein* on February 18, 1896 and left the Imperial Navy as a reserve officer on December 14, 1896.

On April 28, 1897 Geerdtz left the Navy in order to join the Prussian Army. He served as a Secondelieutenant in in the Fusilier Regiment No.33 "Graf Roon" in the former East Prussia. In October 1902 he was assigned to Railway units. In the same year his interest in aviation started and he became a member in the "Verein für Luftschifffahrt," the Aviation Club in Berlin.

On September 15, 1904 he changed again, this time to balloons. He served there until September 30, 1908 and passed his exam to become an airship navigator. Many of his balloon and airship journeys were well documented. As an aviator he met Kaiser Wilhelm II and his spouse Princess Auguste Viktoria as well as numerous other personalities, including the air pioneers Wilbur and Orville Wright.

By August 29, 1909 he was flying with the Zeppelin III (LZ-6) over Berlin for a parade. In April 1910 he appeared on Zeppelin ZII (LZ-5) during military exercises in front of the Kaiser near Bad Homburg. He flew the Parseval PII as commanding officer, May 10–16, together with the Chinese Prince Tsai-Tao. After this flight he was awarded the "Order of the Chinese Dragon" by the prince.

When in May 1910 at Döberitz, not far from Berlin, the first German military flying school was opened, Geerdtz was among the first German military flyers on the "heavier then air" machines. Also drawing from the experience of his balloon and airship flights, Geerdtz later became a successful trainer of younger pilotes. During the military maneuvers of September 16, 1910, Geerdtz having received his German pilot license no.9 (international no.133), flew in a Farman airplane. His flight marked the first time in history that a military observer conducted reconnaissance from an aircraft heavier than air. On October 17, 1910 he flew as co-pilot with the Austrian aviator Illner on a test flight. Joined by four other aircraft, this was the first squadron flight in history.

Shortly before the outbreak of the First World War he undertook an extended holiday to France to photograph air bases. On his return it is said that the Kaiser received him personally.

At the actual outbreak of war Geerdtz was commander of the Hannover air base and Chief of the Field Detachment 21. He served on the Western and Eastern Fronts in this capacity. After having been injured in 1916, he was appointed chief of



Geertz after joining the Heer

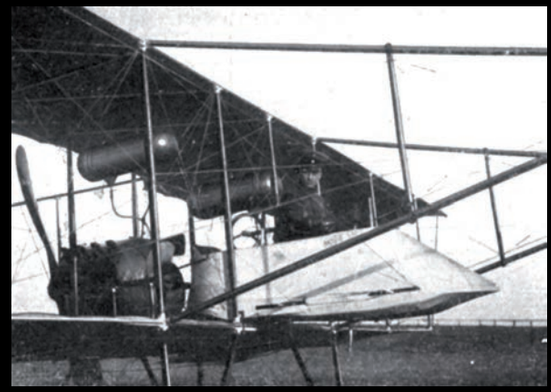


staff of the flight unit. He was responsible for the maintaining of services, raw materials and resources. At the end of the war he was instructed by the victors to disband the air corps.

Recalled in 1938, Geerdtz took part in the Second World War as commander of the air base in Obertraubling. The first jet-propelled airplanes were tested here.

In 1944 Geerdtz went into retirement at 67 years of age. Geedrtz was a soldier who served in the Imperial Navy, in the balloon and airship troops, and was one of the first military flyers in history. One of a kind, he took part in the rapid, frenzied technical developments of the twentieth century as well as the two most awful wars in the history of mankind.

The naval dagger that Franz Geerdtz once wore has an impressive, hand-forged Damascus blade, ornately worked in the "maiden hair" pattern. The large ivory grip is decorated with double wire coiling. On the reverse side of the ornately engraved scabbard is the monogram FG. On the obverse side is a fouled anchor crested with an Imperial crown. It has been beautifully made with truly great workmanship and skill.



Geerdtz in Albatros-Flyer, ca. 1910

All "heavy" naval daggers are extremely rare on account of so few having been produced and are highly sought after by collectors worldwide. Such a dagger from the hand of an officer, with this historical background, is certainly one of the most seldom to be found and would form the central piece of any collection.



Geerdtz during the Second World War









Imperial Naval Officer Dagger of Kapitänleutnant Freiherr Rudolf von Speth-Schülzburg







Imperial Naval Officer Dagger of Kapitänleutnant Freiherr Rudolf von Speth-Schülzburg

Our subject here is an 1890 pattern dagger for Sea Cadets, which the bearer, Baron Rudolf von Speth-Schülzburg, adapted for use as a naval officer when he received his officer's commission. To achieve this he acquired an ornately decorated crown pommel with open cross-pieces, to replace the original version where arches were not formed. The transformation of the required dagger for Sea Cadets to meet the pattern specifications for a naval officer's dagger was thus easily accomplished. As an officer, he wore a dagger portepée which is similar in construction to the sabre portepée, although it was smaller in size.

Baron Rudolf von Speth-Schülzburg was born on October 17, 1884 in Schönthal in the Kingdom of Württemberg. His father Baptist Freiherr von Speth-Schülzburg was the Royal Forestry Inspector.

Rudolf joined the Imperial Navy on April 1, 1903. His commission to Midshipman came a year later. Following on April 15, 1904 he was assigned to the Baltic Sea force. On March 27, 1909 he was appointed as Lieutenant. During this time he was serving in the torpedo flotilla on the Torpedo Boat *V153*. At this point he updated his dagger to conform with officer specifications. On December 10, 1912 he was commissioned as a Leutnant. He served in China on the SMS *Tsingtau* as commanding officer, from October until December 1912.

At the outbreak of the First World War he was on the battleship cruiser SMS *Derfflinger*. As artillery officer he took part in the combat at Dogger Bank where the ship received serious hits. Baron Rudolf von Speth-Schülzburg was promoted to Korvettenkapitän on April 16, 1915. From May 31 until June 1, 1916 the battle of Jutland raged, the biggest sea battle of the Great War. As artillery



Freiherr Rudolf von Speth-Schülzburg in 1916



officer von Speth experienced the entire episode and his ship and gunners were badly hit.

For his leadership and performance in this battle he was awarded the Iron Cross on June 28, 1916.

With the rising demands in Germany for unrestricted submarine warfare (the sinking of enemy as well as neutral ships in a specified sea area by German submarines), U-boats and crews were significantly increased in 1916 and especially in 1917.

For this reason von Speth went into further training at the beginning of 1917 to become a submarine officer. Submarine war was declared unrestricted on February 1, 1917 by the German government. In September of that same year he was appointed first watch officer under Lieutenant Commander Rudolf Schneider on the submarine SM *U-87*.

The declaration of unrestricted submarine war by the German government was one of the main reasons why America entered into the First World War in 1917. On the other hand the Americans provided significant material to the Allied forces and shipping it on commercial vessels.

From today's point of view it was a fatal decision. However, it fitted well with the economic Entente powers and the military potential of the USA towards the extremely uncertain expectations of being able to "starve out England." Nevertheless the German submarine crews fought a self-sacrificing battle in the First World War, though it hardly changed the general situation for Germany.

U-87 undertook various operations in the waters of the North Atlantic around the British Isles. During this time, 21 trading ships were sunk, including neutral ships.

On July 11, 1917 the heavy British freighter KIOTO was sunk by *U-87* on its way from New York to Manchester, southwest of Fastnet.

On October 13, 1917, the *U-87* was making way in a storm in British waters when Commander Rudolf Schneider was on his way to the bridge and was washed overboard. Although the crew managed to rescue him, he died on board and was given a sea burial in the waters between the Shetlands and Norway. Baron von Speth-Schülzburg took over command. Under his command *U-87* sent three ships to the bottom of the sea. SS *Little Gem* with 114 BRT was sunk on December 13, 1917. The wooden schooner built by W. Date & Sons, Kingsbridge in 1893 and operated by E. Stephens, Fowey, was sunk in the English Channel west of the Casquets, Channel Islands with the loss of five of her crew.

The SS *Daybreak* was a Welsh steamer owned by the Scarisbrick Steamship Co. and built in 1911 by W. Gray & Co. Although the *Daybreak* was a British merchant ship, she was defensively armed due to the state of hostilities. She was at sea near Strangford Lough shore, off the Ards Peninsula County Down Ireland, en-route from Huelve for Clyde and finally sank close to the South Rock. The South Rock is the largest of an extensive group of rocks one nautical mile northeast of Kearney Point, southwest of Belfast. She had previously survived a surface attack by a U-boat in the Arctic Sea on November 1, 1916, beating it off with her own gun.

However, on Christmas Eve 1917 twenty-one crew members, including the captain, died when she was finally sunk by a torpedo from *U-87* one mile east of the South Rock Lightship. An eyewitness, John Bailie of Newcastle, a boat contractor attending the South Rock, recalled the loss of the steamer one mile east. "I remember being on the South Rock as a temporary for 2/6 a day, feed yourself. On Christmas Eve 1917 at about midday, the *Daybreak*, loaded with maize, was torpedoed and 21 were lost. Her nose was cut clean off. It happened so quick her propeller was going round in the air as she sank. You talk about explosions, boilers were bursting one after another."

A poem was written by Joe Earl to remember that faithful day:



The SS DAYBREAK

Nineteen seventeen it was—during perilous days,
The freighter SS Daybreak loaded deep with maize,
Steamed along on Christmas Eve near the Southern Rock,
Off the coast of County Down abeam of Strangford Lough,
No notice or forewarning, a torpedo found its mark,
It came and blew the nose right off—plunging all in dark
The vessel's screw rotating during its descent,
Her boilers then exploding as underneath they went.
U-Boat Eighty Seven had loosed her lethal load,
To meet this helpless target on a winter's ocean road,
One and twenty brave men—the total of her crew,
Murdered in the Irish Sea by folk they never knew,
It was seen by witnesses or perhaps we'd never know,
What occurred to brave men dragged down far below,
Entombed there now forever, thirty fathoms deep,
Akin to unsung mariners in Davy Jones's keep.



German U-boat on patrol

The SS *Agberi* was torpedoed and sunk in St. George's Channel, 18 nautical miles northwest of Bardsey Island, Pembrokeshire on December 25, 1917. She was en route from Dakar, Africa to Liverpool carrying passengers and a cargo of silver and ivory. Officially there were no casualties but the Elder Dempster Fleet in the War lists the names of two crewmen who lost their lives while serving aboard the *Agberi*.

On the same day, Christmas 1917, *U-87* attacked another enemy convoy in the Irish Sea. In this attack, the *U-87* was spotted from the lookout on the British sloop HMS *Buttercup*, and was rammed. It was possible for *U-87* to submerge, although it was badly damaged. However, the British patrol boat *PC-56* reached its diving position and shot two depth charges into it. The impact of the detonation forced the *U-87* out of the deep whereby the *PC-56* fired at it and rammed it several times. The submarine broke up. Since the bow floated on the surface of the water for about ten minutes, the crews of the British ship could see clearly into the insides of the submarine.

U-87 lies at approximately 52° 56'N, 5° 7'W. All 44 crew members of the vessel, including their commander Rudolf Baron von Speth-Schülzburg, died in this attack.

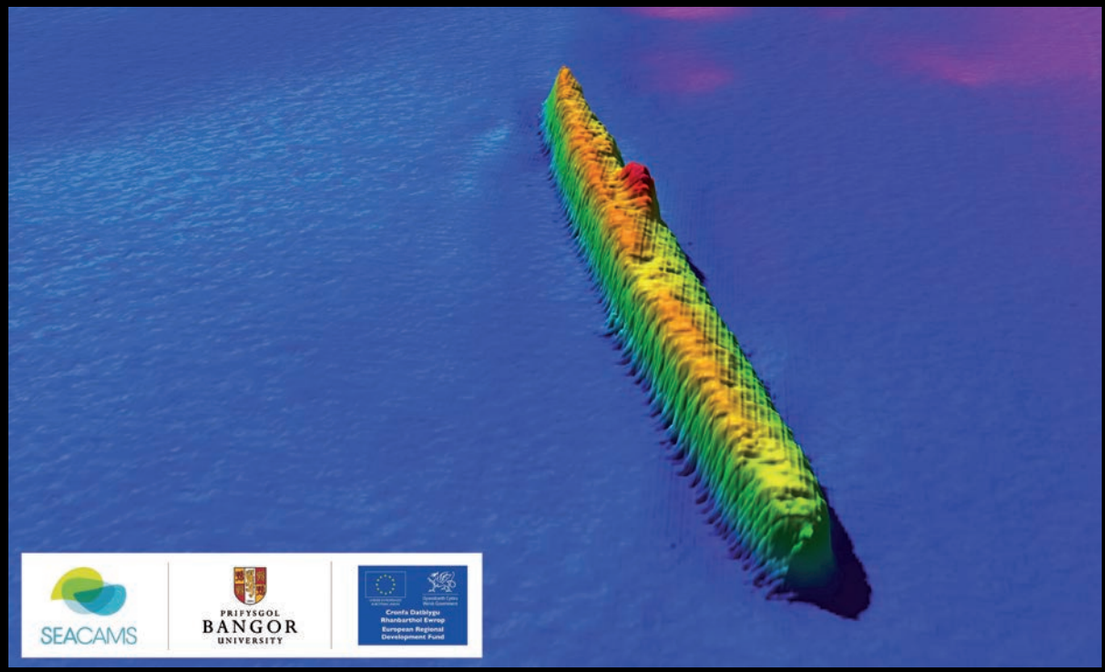


Photo: Bangor University

An image from a multibeam sonar survey of an area approximately ten miles northwest of Bardsey Island reveals the wreck of the U-87 which was lost with all 43 hands on Christmas Day 1917. The German submarine was rammed by a British naval vessel shortly after it had sunk a cargo vessel nearby.









HMS Buttercup







Deluxe Imperial Naval Dagger of Kapitän zur See Otto Fontane




O.u.Schrader s.l. O.Fontane



Deluxe Imperial Naval Dagger of Kapitän zur See Otto Fontane

This magnificent dagger belonged to Kapitän zur See Otto Fontane and represents the epitome of the Damascus smith's craft. The folded steel blade is a remarkable combination of styles commonly referred to as "ribbon," "large roses" and "maiden hair." The dedication and slogan in high relief on the unusual dual fuller blade, a blade construction we see only on daggers dedicated by crowned heads to each other, points to this being a custom ordered, deluxe blade from Weyersberg, Kirschbaum & Co. This is one of the finest blades produced in the period.

Otto Fontane was born on July 21, 1887 in the city of Münster, Westphalia as the grandson of the famous poet Theodor Fontane. His father was Theodor Fontane (born November 3, 1856 in Berlin; died May 16, 1933 Berlin) and his mother was Martha Soldmann (born November 21, 1865 in Dortmund; died October 12, 1934 in Berlin).

On April 1, 1906 Fontane entered the Imperial German Navy (crew of 1906) and on April 6 he was promoted to Fähnrich zur See.

Fontane's military education required him to run through various shipboard commands and naval training programs. Between April 1 and May 31, 1908, Fontane served on SMS *Württemberg* together with Otto von Schrader who was Fontane's classmate during naval school. On September 18, 1908 he was assigned to the SMS *Braunschweig* sailing to La Coruna from July 18–25, 1909.

On September 30, 1909 he was promoted to Leutnant zur See. This day he received his presentation dagger from his friend and classmate Otto von Schrader. Fontane was subsequently promoted to Oberleutnant zur See on September 4, 1912.

F rst World War

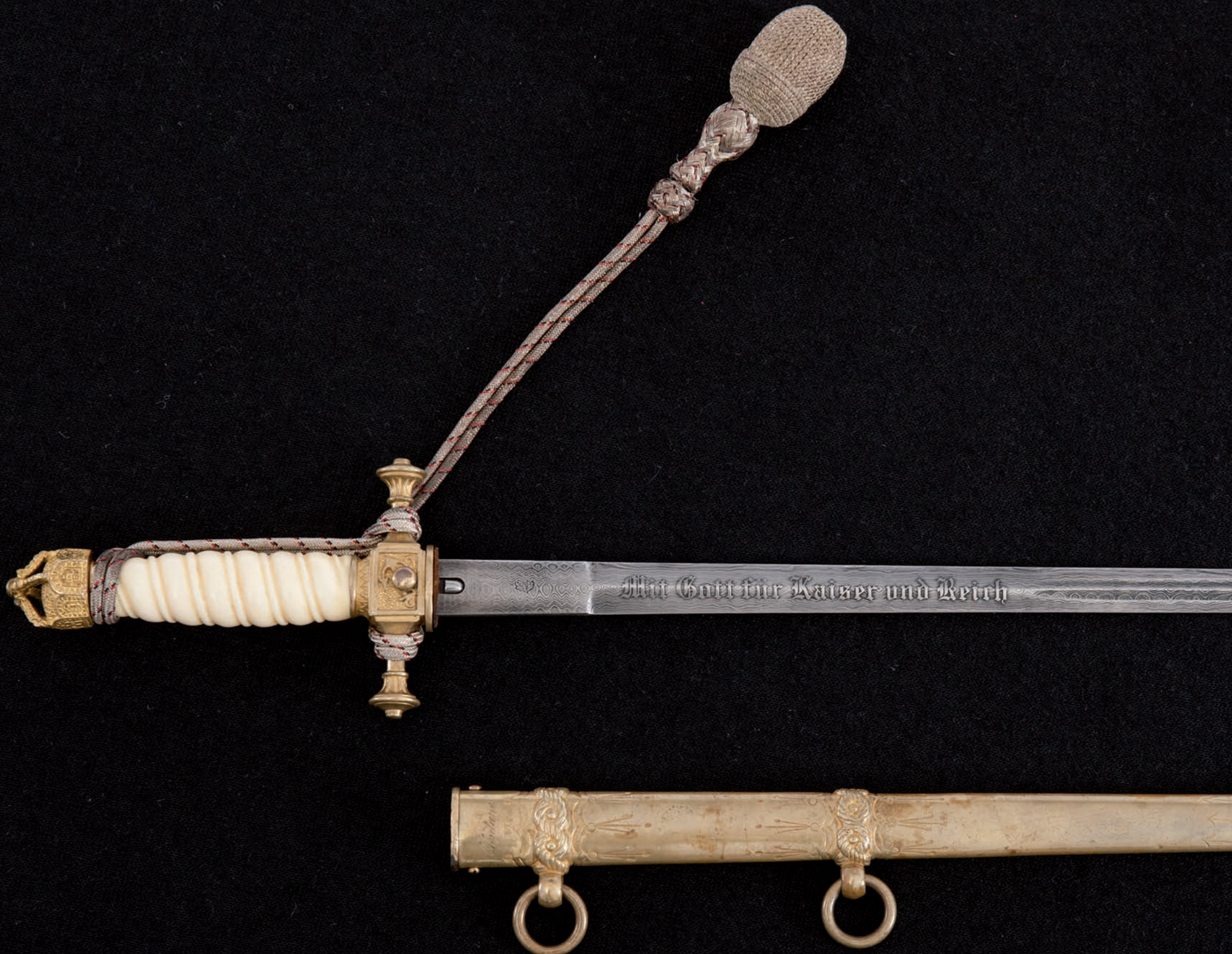
Fontane served from April 1 until June 30, 1916 on the submarine dock-ship SMS *Vulkan*. The SMS *Vulkan*, named after the mythical god of fire and forge, was one of the two docking ships of the Imperial Navy. They were developed to lift sunken or damaged submarines for repair. SMS *Vulkan* was launched on September 28, 1907 from the stack. With the rapid development of larger and heavier submarines, in a very short time the *Vulkan* proved no longer suitable, though the ship was still in service in 1916.

From July 1916 on, Fontane served on the cruiser SMS *Graudenz* in the II and IV Reconnaissance Group. The group advanced into the northern part of the North Sea and west to the island of Schiermonnikoog. On April 26, 1917 Fontane was promoted to Kapitänleutnant zur See.

Before and during the Great War Fontane served on various torpedo boats.

From January 1918 on Fontane served on IX Torpedo Boat Flotilla, commanded by Korvettenkapitän Hermann Ehrhardt.

Fontane served on torpedo boat *S36*—built October 17, 1914, commissioned January 4, 1915—for fighting missions in the English Channel until the hostilities ended on November 11, 1918. *S36*


Mit Gott für Kaiser und Reich



was, in accordance with the Versailles Treaty terms of the Armistice, interned in Scapa Flow beginning November 22, 1918. The crew, ignoring orders to hand over the ships to the British Navy, scuttled it there on June 21, 1919.

Previously, Hermann Ehrhardt had returned to Wilhelmshaven with most of his former flotilla crews on a transport ship. In view of the dangerous mine barrier off the German coast, the crew mutinied and refused to continue. Ehrhardt took command by force and navigated the ship safely back to Wilhelmshaven.

After the war Ehrhardt, and most likely Fontane, returned to Wilhelmshaven where Bernhard Kuhnt was the first president of the newly founded Free State of Oldenburg. On January 27, 1919 communists proclaimed the "Soviet-Republic Wilhelmshaven." Ehrhardt gathered around him about 300 men, mostly professional soldiers, and that same evening stormed the 1,000-man barracks, the headquarters of the revolutionary sailors. With the use of boat-guns, the resistance quickly collapsed. Now the foundation of a volunteer paramilitary formation was pushed forward.

In 1920 Fontane entered the II Marine brigade "Freikorps Marine Brigade Ehrhardt." The Marine brigade Ehrhardt was a Free Corps group of around 6,000 men formed by Hermann Ehrhardt in the aftermath of the First World War, also known as II Marine Brigade or the Ehrhardt Brigade. It took part in the fighting for the cities of central Germany and the northwestern ports, in addition to participating in the Kapp Putsch.

When the II Marine brigade was abolished, Fontane lived as a civilian in Berlin.

Re-activated in 1941, Fontane served aboard blockade-runners. A blockade-runner is usually a lighter-weight ship used for evading a naval blockade of a port or strait, as opposed to confronting the blockaders to break the blockade.

Very often blockade running is done in order to transport cargo, for example to bring food or arms to a blockaded city. In other cases the blockade-runners would carry mail in an attempt to communicate with the outside world. During the Second World War most actions were done to clear mined waters for German U-boats, guiding them to the open sea or securing safe entrance into heavily guarded German harbors. Fontane served aboard various vessels as commander, receiving additional promotions.

In April 1944 he was commander of the 3rd Flotilla. At the end of the war this unit undertook operations in the Baltic Sea, mostly minesweeping and rescuing fleeing German civilians from the eastern parts of Germany.

After the war he worked on minesweepers for the Allies and was dismissed May 16, 1946.

He died June 18, 1958.


Mit Gott für Kaiser und
O.v.Schrader s.l. O.F


Reich
ntane


Fortune



Imperial Naval Swords



Imperial Naval Saber of Oberleutnant zur See Hermann Zabel







Imperial Naval Saber of Oberleutnant zur See Hermann Zabel

This is the saber of Naval Infantry (Marines) Officer, Oberleutnant Hermann Zabel. It is notable due to its enormous proportions relative to standard size and is termed a "Grosser" or loosely translated to English as "Grand" model by period manufactures. "Grosser" size Navy sabers are relatively rare. Often the belief is that these were reserved for high-ranking officers only. However, this is not the case. Sabers were a privately purchased item and any officer with the financial means was allowed to carry one.

Zabel was born in February 1878. He was a reserve officer in the Landwehr 2 (similar to the national or home guard) and called to active duty upon formation of a second marine division on November 20, 1914. Combined with the First Marine Division, these naval troops formed the land based Marine-Korps-Flandern (Naval Corps Flandern) under Admiral Ludwig von Schröder. These troops fought protecting the German westernmost line adjacent to the North Sea of the Western Front. Zabel served as a Leutnant in the 4th Marine Regiment, 11th Company. He saw combat in Flanders Belgium, second battle of Ypres. Like many others in this particularly bloody battle, he received fatal wounds, dying in November 1915 at Navy Field Hospital 4 from complications related to his combat wounds.

The genuine Damascus blade of this saber is extremely well preserved. The blade is of etched Damascus steel of the less commonly seen "ribbon" pattern. The blade is nickel-plated and portrays a raised naval motif typical of the imperial period and includes the traditional crown over fouled anchor and heraldic eagle of Germany.

The massive hilt is in the form of a lion's head with red and green eyes mimicking the International Navigation standard for port and starboard. "Zabel" is jeweler engraved on the reverse folding scabbard lock. While the sword blade is unmarked, the etched design is clearly that of the Eickhorn Company.





Imperial Naval Saber of Oberleutnant zur See Gustav Wetzel







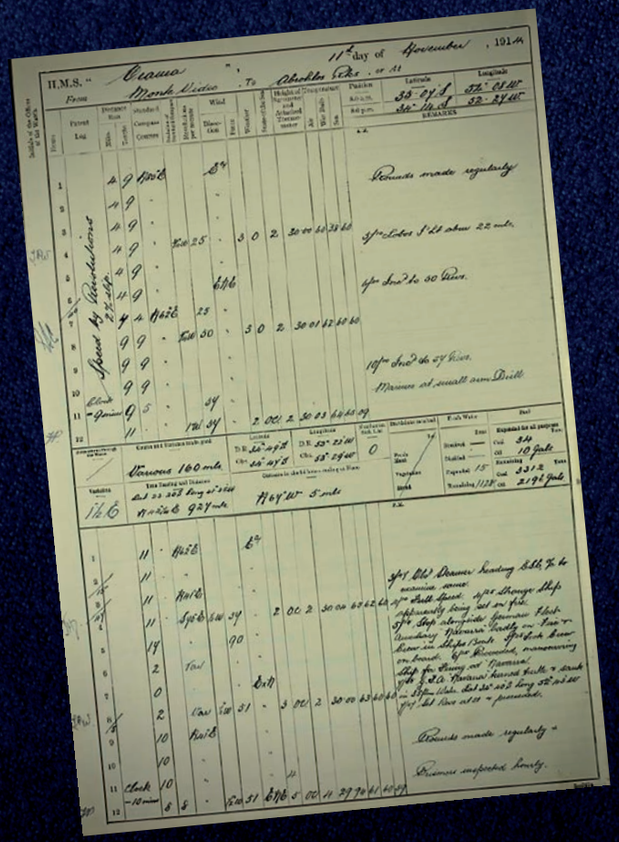
Imperial Naval Saber of Oberleutnant zur See Gustav Wetzel

The Imperial Naval saber of Oberleutnant zur See Gustav Wetzel is characteristic of a deluxe version of the standard saber. The genuine Damascus steel etched blade, highly chased scabbard mounts and hilt fittings were all extra cost features.

Wetzel was born in February 1886. He received his naval commission in April 1909. As a reserve officer, he was called to duty in April 1914. Wetzel served as watch officer aboard the SMS *Navarra*, a former passenger and cargo ship of the German HAPAG Line that was requisitioned by the Navy at the outbreak of the First World War to serve as a fleet auxiliary vessel assigned to a cruiser squadron. On the afternoon of November 11, 1914, the British armed merchant cruiser HMS *Orama* off the La Plata River intercepted the SMS *Navarra*. To avoid capture of the vessel, the crew of the SMS *Navarra* set the ship afire and scuttled her. She sank that evening. The German crew was taken aboard the British ship HMS *Orama* as prisoners of war. Gustav Wetzel spent the rest of the war in POW camps in England, Jamaica and Canada. He was promoted to Oberleutnant zur See in July 1920 upon his discharge.

The Gustav Wetzel saber is in outstanding condition exhibiting fine quality chasing and fire gilding to the lion's head pommel and cross guard. "Wetzel" is neatly jeweler engraved on the reverse langet. The scabbard fittings are all decorated with additional hand chasing. The fittings on the entire saber are heavily fire-gilded.

The fine Damascus blade is of the "maiden hair" or Damastahl pattern and exhibits a fine raised etching of a traditional nautical motif. A popular patriotic slogan of the time "*Festen Muth in Sturm und Gefahr*" is highlighted. Loosely translated, it means "Steadfastly Courageous in Storm And Peril." The military effects purveyor's name, A. Luneberg, Kiel, is stamped on the blade spine.



HMS Orama ship's log documenting encounter with SMS Navarra


Wetzel



True Bearing and Distance	Courses in the Standard Compass	Water Ballast	Distilled	Oil
Lat 23 20S Long 41°36E		Vegetables	Expended 15	Remaining Tons
N42½W & 92½ mls.	N64°W 5 mls	Coal	Remaining 1128	Oil 3312 / 2196 Gals.

11		N62E			6a								
11		"			"								
11		N41E			"								
11		SyE	SW	54	"	2	00	2	30 00	63	62	60	
14		"		90	"								
2		Taw		"	"								
0		"		"	Exh								
2		Var	SW	51	"	3	00	2	30·00	63	60	60	
10		N41E			"								
10		"			"								
10		"			"	12							
8	8	"	SW	51	6N6	5	00	4	29 24	61	60	58	

F.L.

3/5ª Blue Steamer heading E.S.E. ½ E to examine same.

4/5ª Full Speed 4/25 Strange Ships apparently being out on fire.

5/5ª Stop alongside German Fleet Auxiliary "Navara" badly on fire & Crew in Ships Boats. 5/25 Took Crew on board. 6/5ª Proceeded, manoeuvring Ship for Firing at "Navara".

9/5ª S.S.A. "Navara" burned to the water & sank in 33 fms Water. Lat 24° 40'S Long 52° 13'W 9/5ª Set Revs at 51 & proceeded.

Rounds made regularly &

Engines inspected hourly.

Imperial Naval Saber of Kapitänleutnant Willi Ohlmer










Ziehe mich nicht ohne Grund
Stecke mich nicht ein ohne Ehre



Imperial Naval Saber of Kapitänleutnant Willi Ohlmer

This deluxe Imperial Navy saber belonged to Kapitänleutnant Willi Ohlmer. It was presented to Ohlmer by his grandfather upon receiving his naval commission on November 25, 1905. Gifts from family members or friends to commemorate an officer cadet receiving his commission were not uncommon. It was considered an honor to become a naval officer in the Imperial Navy and generally that honor was reserved for the upper classes. These gifts are invariably dedicated and are often elaborate and of singular beauty.

Ohlmer was already an experienced naval officer upon commencement of hostilities in 1914. He served as watch officer aboard the gunboat SMS *Panther* and torpedo boat *S 125* assigned to the U-boat School. He continued service at the U-Boat School aboard the training submarine *U-2*. He was later promoted and served the last two years of the war as commander of torpedo boats *T 137* and *G 135* assigned to the III U-Boat Flotilla. He left the Navy following the end of the First World War and was discharged in December 1918.

Willi Ohlmer's saber reflects the pride and love of his grandfather. It has all of the deluxe features that indicate that this was custom ordered. The maker mark of "king and knight head" stamped on the blade was used by Weyersberg, Kirschbaum & Co. until about 1910.

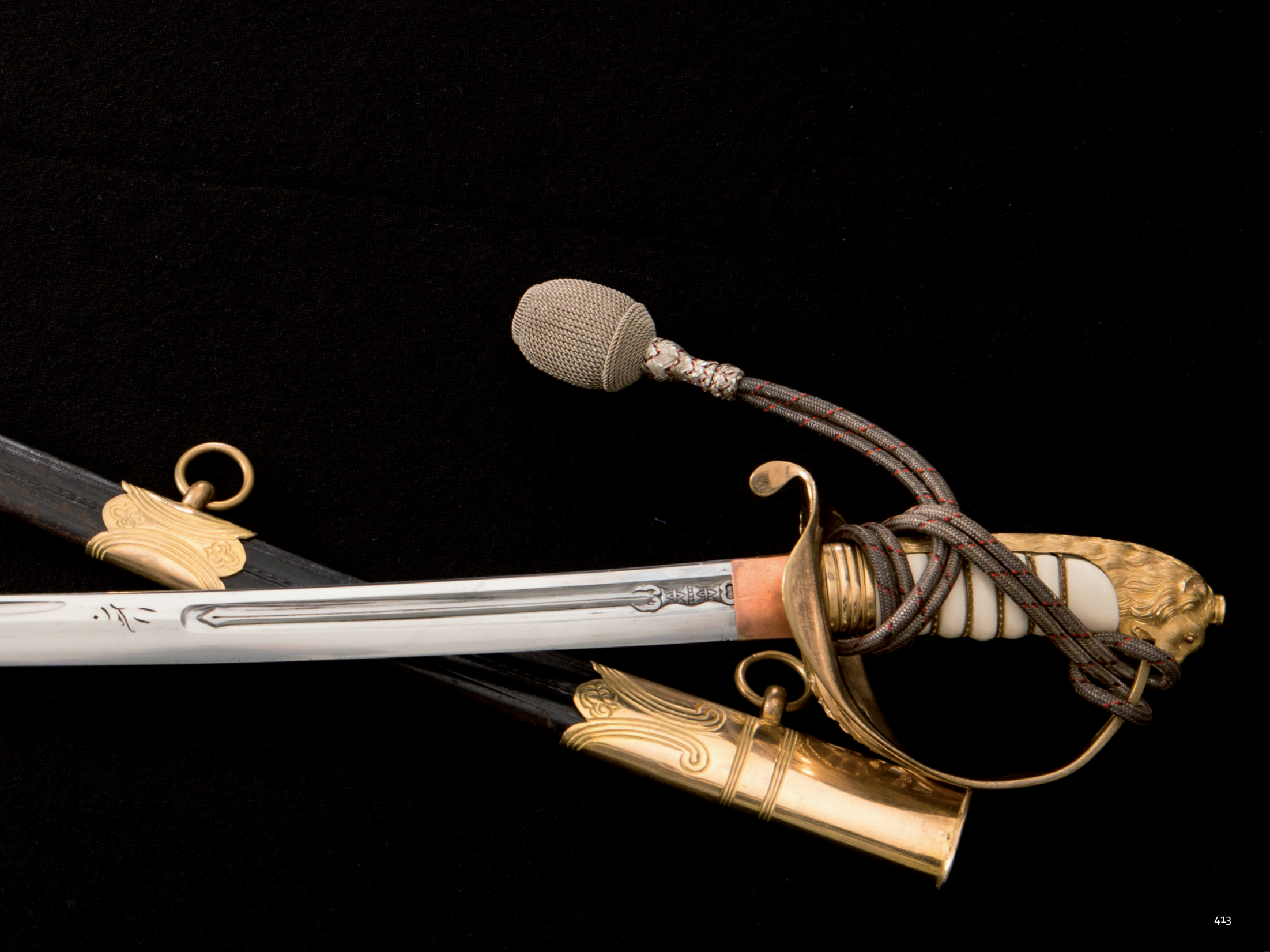
The gold hilt fittings are of slightly larger proportions than standard and exhibits extra handwork and chiseling, particularly the lion's mane and detail to the rear of the folding knuckle guard, which is usually plain. The lion's head contains green and red eyes reflecting the international maritime color system for port and starboard. The name "Ohlmer" is jeweler engraved on the folding scabbard lock. A dedication on the reverse of the upper scabbard band reads "My loving Grandson, 25 November, 1905."

The blade is etched genuine Damascus steel with gold gilded and blue highlights. This deluxe feature is relatively uncommon on Navy blades as compared to their Army counterparts during the period. The Damascus steel pattern is referred to by collectors as "maiden hair." The raised gold slogan on the blade translates loosely to "Draw me not without justice, wield me not without honor."

Imperial Naval Swords of Konteradmiral Paul von Hintze













Imperial Naval Swords of Konteradmiral Paul von Hintze

These two Navy swords belonged to one of the most dynamic international personalities of the period, Konteradmiral Paul von Hintze.

The first saber is a classic early Imperial Navy sword with design elements more closely resembling those of the British Royal Navy on which the German design was initially based. The well-preserved fittings are of gold gilded brass. The fixed basket, small lion head pommel and flared scabbard throat are features similar to British swords of the period. The elegant basket is cast with the Hohenzollern crown over a large fouled anchor. Details and decoration are hand chiseled into the fine hilt. The grip is wire wrapped genuine ivory. The pipe-backed blade with false edge is of a magnificent forged Damascus steel. Von Hintze is carrying this sword in the photograph of him bedecked in his formal gala dress uniform.

Paul Hintze was born on February 2, 1864 in Schwedt, Pomerania to a middle-class family. His noble title was bestowed later in his life. He entered the Kaiserliche Marine in 1882 and served as a cadet aboard the SMS *Prince Albert*.

From 1894–96 he attended the prestigious Naval Academy in Kiel, an honor afforded but a few select naval officers and an acknowledgement of the confidence his superiors placed in him. Following the Academy he was assigned to the Supreme Command of the Navy and was a close assistant to Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz. There he made a positive impression on Tirpitz and in 1898, Hintze was sent to become the liaison officer between the East Asian Battle group and the Imperial Naval High Command.

The second sword is unusual as it has a hilt of an Imperial German Navy Sword but is mounted with a Japanese katana blade. This practice is not unprecedented, as other examples exist. Given Hintze's assignment in East Asia, it is hypothesized that Hintze either procured or was presented a Japanese katana after which he had the blade mounted to a naval hilt. These Japanese blades were highly revered then as they are today for their outstanding quality.

After a brief assignment in 1901 as first officer aboard the battleship SMS *Kaiser Wilhelm*, Hintze was called back to the Naval High Command in 1902. This was the last assignment that Hintze had of a military nature. Throughout his career Hintze demonstrated that he possessed the charisma, polish, social skills and worldliness that endeared him to many. He was a master at easily establishing and nurturing close personal relationships. He was always a well-liked commander at sea. Thus, his following assignments groomed him for a long second career as a diplomat and some historians would claim, a spy.

While still a naval officer, he was dispatched in 1903 to the German embassy in St. Petersburg, Russia as naval attaché. His insightful reports and assessment of the Russian political situation captured the interest of Kaiser Wilhelm II. The Kaiser began to use Hintze for direct communications between himself and his cousin, the Russian Czar, Nicholas II. This allowed the Kaiser to bypass the German Foreign Office, which he didn't trust. Hintze was well liked by both the Kaiser and the Czar and maintained a close relationship with each. In 1906 the Kaiser, effectively making Kapitan zur See Hintze the direct representative of the German Emperor in Russia, promoted Hintze to Flügeladjutant. With Hintze's continued service, in 1908 Kaiser Wilhelm II made Hintze a nobleman with the title of Baron. He also received a promotion to Konteradmiral. Admiral von Hintze was recalled from St. Petersburg in 1911 and assigned to the German Foreign Office. He retired from the Navy shortly after as a Konteradmiral.

Admiral von Hintze formally entered the diplomatic service and became the ambassador to Mexico 1911–14 during the Mexican Revolution. He arrived in Veracruz in April 1911. He established a network of German-born and -educated secret service agents in Mexico to provide important intelligence regarding the revolution to the German government. He also promoted government-sanctioned German arms sales to Mexico.

Von Hintze fostered a fruitful relationship with Francisco I. Madero, President of Mexico. His agent, the notorious Felix Sommerfeld, became Madero's Chief of Secret Service. Sommerfeld was a German-born and -educated mining engineer, American soldier and deserter, failed prospector, soldier in the Boxer Rebellian, arms merchant for Pancho Villa and spy. In this way von Hintze was able to stay abreast of the political developments in the Mexican capital as well as the skirmishes along the Mexican–American border and monitor the deterioration of relationships between the two countries.





In February 1913, Victoriano Huerta would overthrow Madero and assume the Presidency of Mexico. Anticipating this coup, von Hintze attempted to negotiate a peaceful change of leadership and the safe passage of Madero and his family into exile. It was not to pass and Madero was ousted and executed.

The Huerta government however, was almost immediately challenged by the combined revolutionary factions united in opposition under the leadership of Venustiano Carranza. With Federal troops drained and resources thin, Huerta began losing the civil war with repeated defeats at the hands of Generals Pancho Villa and Alvaro Obregon.

Given the magnitude of violence in Mexico and spillover into the United States, in 1912 by order of the U.S. Congress, arms shipments would no longer be allowed between the U.S. and Mexico. Mexico now relied on arms and munitions from Europe and Asia.

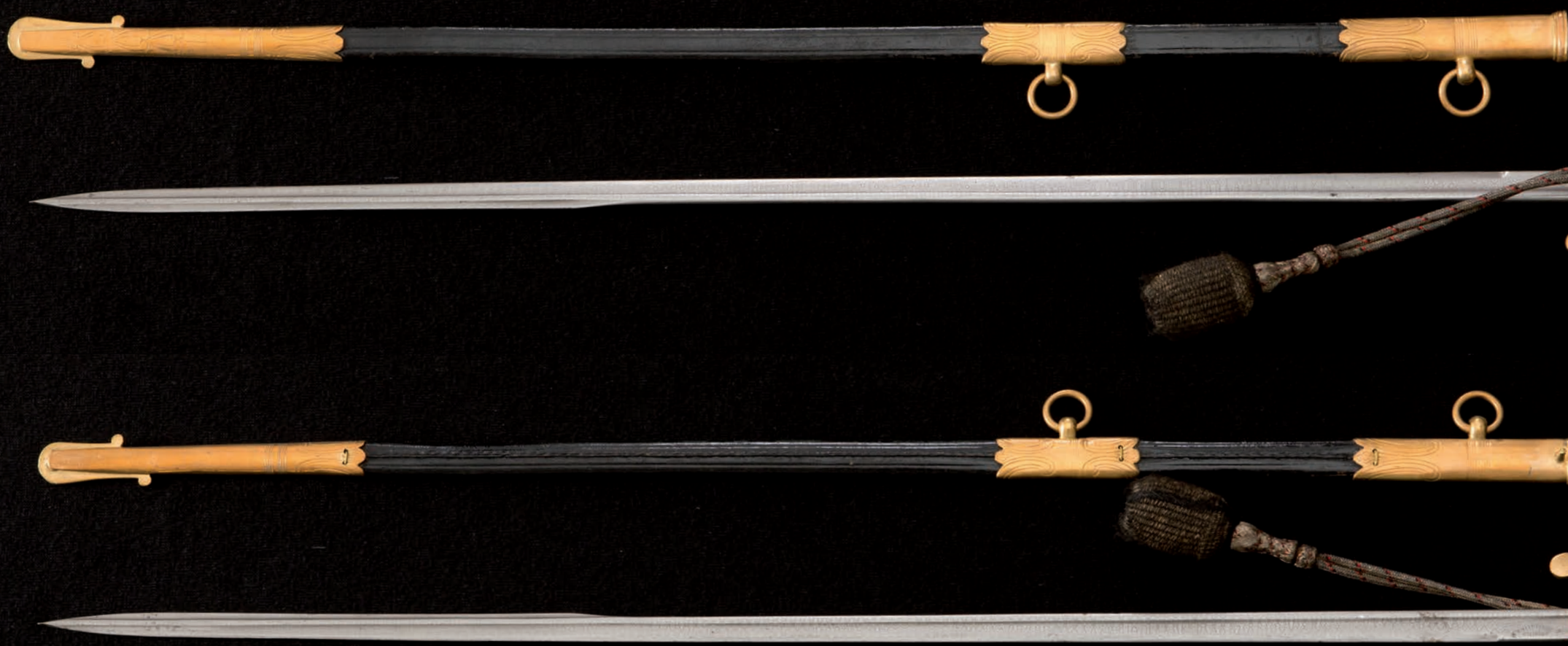
Through Russian diplomatic connections, arrangements were made in New York to purchase a supply of guns and ordnance for the Huerta government. They were to be sent first to Odessa, Russia in an effort to work around U.S. sanctions. An American financier sympathetic to Huerta paid the freight for shipping to Hamburg Germany. Here the German steamer of the HAPAG line, SS *Ypiranga*, was commissioned to transport the arms and munitions to the Huerta's federal government. In April 1914, American forces occupied the port of Veracruz in an effort to prevent the SS *Ypiranga* from delivering the shipment of arms. Without a clear declaration of war on Mexico by the United States, it was considered an illegal act and the ship was released. However, this lack of a clear objective for American forces led to a confusing action that dragged into a seven-month stalemate and resulted in the death of 193 Mexican soldiers, 19 American servicemen, and an unknown number of civilians. The SS *Ypiranga* landed its cargo consisting of American and German Mausers at Coatzacoalcos instead.

By July 1914, Huerta was all but finished. He appealed to the German government for assistance in fleeing Mexico as Germany had largely supported his presidency. Reluctantly, Germany agreed and Huerta fled Mexico on the German cruiser SMS *Dresden* arranged by Ambassador von Hintze. Von Hintze also left Mexico at the same time and began a series of wartime diplomatic assignments.

During the First World War, von Hintze became the ambassador to China from 1914–17 followed by Norway from 1917–18. In September 1918, Wilhelm II appointed von Hintze as Secretary of the Foreign Office. In this capacity von Hintze advised the Kaiser towards liberalization of the government and was involved in the discussions that led to the decision to seek an armistice. Von Hintze was practically responsible for the decision of the Kaiser to leave Spa in Belgium and to drive to the Netherlands. As a sea officer he resisted the idea of abdication, especially issued too early and therefore wrongly from Max von Baden in Berlin, but as a politician he realized the situation quickly. As foreign minister it is highly likely that he was involved in the early arrangements for Wilhelm's escape to Count Bentinck of Amerongen, Netherlands who was—like Wilhelm II—a knight of the Order of St. John.

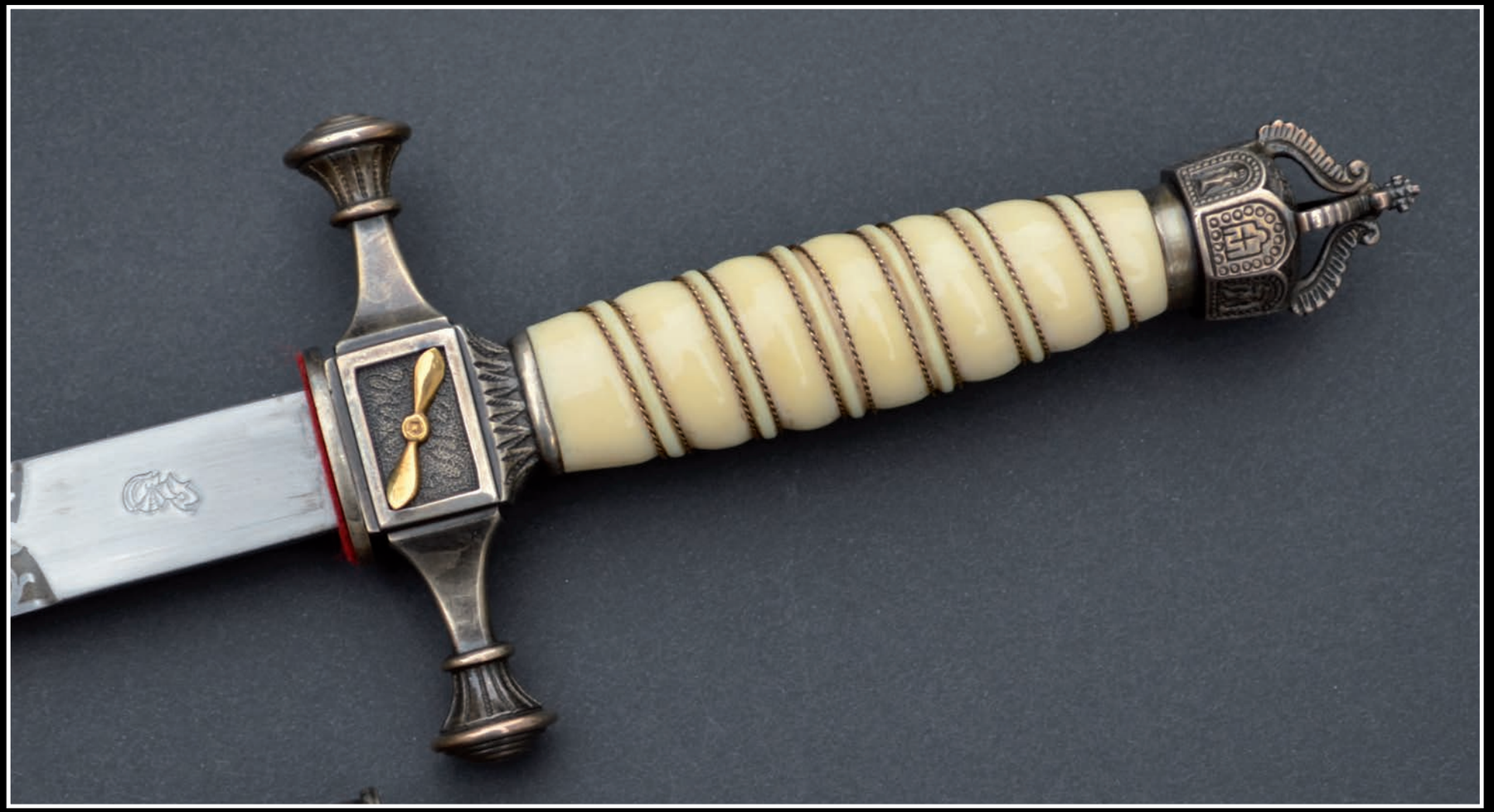
Konteradmiral Paul von Hintze died on August 19, 1941 in Merano, Italy.

The small sized von Hintze Saber





Imperial German Automobile and Aero Corps Daggers



The German Imperial Automobile Corps Dress Dagger

Pre-World War I Developments

The Automobile Club

On July 10, 1899 the German Automobile Club (DAC) was founded in the Hotel Bristol, Berlin. It was felt by the founders of the DAC that the development of automotive sport in Germany lagged behind many Western nations. For example, in France automotive sports was being highly supported and multiple world records were being set. Over 62 mph had already been reached. Therefore the purpose of the DAC was to promote German automotive sport to the level of the rest of Europe.

The first patron of the club was the Grand Duchess Anastasia of Mecklenburg-Schwerin. Duke Viktor von Ratibor was chosen as chairman and held this position for many years. By Cabinet Order His Majesty the Kaiser took over the patronage personally, beginning December 24, 1905. Concomitantly, the club was renamed the Imperial Automobile Club (Kaiserlicher Automobil-Club or KAC).

The club participated in many rallies including the Gordon Bennet International Rally. From 1908 onwards the KAC hosted the "Prince Heinrich Rally" whereby His Highness himself stood patron for the winner's prize.

By 1910 the club had 48 motorcars available. These vehicles fulfilled military mobility demands in the case of war clearly giving the club a paramilitary character.

Membership to this elite club, even as a driver, was considered a prestigeous achievement and an honor. The status of being a driver was actually awarded and not simply applied for through membership.

The Automobile Corps

Shortly after the turn of the century the utility of the automobile for military mobilization could be foreseen. The few German automobile owners were usually wealthy, belonged to the upper classes, were nationalists and pro-monarchy. In the patriotic spirit of the times, some club members didn´t just want to impress the public at big events with their driving skills but rather wanted to make their vehicles and skills useful to their country for military affairs.

Prince Heinrich, the Kaiser's brother, always embraced new technology and was very enthusiastic of the proposition of the utilization of civilian vehicles in the event of war. The proposal was enthusiatically received by the military and the DAC alike. The military forces needed the services and did not have to pay for the expensive vehicles. DAC member-drivers would belong to an elite military organization of social significance.



Logo of the German Automobile Club



Logo of the German Volunteer Automobile Corps

On October 28, 1904 Baron von Brandenstein called a DAC meeting and proposed the establishment of a militarily organized Automobile Corps. The members of the representative committee motioned in favor. Prince Heinrich and Baron von Brandenstein had already made preparations such that on January 6 of the following year, Brandenstein could appear and report as Chief of Staff in front of Kaiser Wilhelm II. For this occasion he wore the new corps uniform for the first time made of gray fabric with dark madder-red collar and brown boots. He also wore a Hirschfäenger as a sidearm. In a subsequent Cabinet Order of the Kaiser, the German Automobile Corps or DFAC was formally established. The Kaiser named his brother, Prince Heinrich Albert Wilhelm of Prussia, as Commander in Chief of the DFAC.

The first commander of the DFAC was Duke Adolf Friedrich of Mecklenburg. Later Prince Heinrich's son, Prince Waldemar of Prussia, would assume the role.

To become a member of the corps, one had to already be a member of the Imperial Automobile Club. This allowed for the recruitment of new DFAC members. The regulations required that every member must commit himself to four years' service and take part in up to 3 ten-day maneuvers. Beyond that, in the case of war, he must be at disposal with his vehicle and a mechanic without restriction. For this the member was awarded the status of reserve officer. This status was highly desirable in non-military circles, in particular in the middle classes and lower aristocracy.

A list of members sounded like names taken from a "Who´s Who" of the Kaiser era; owners of stately homes, merchants, lawyers, architects, factory owners, engineers, brewery owners, consuls general, professors, private tutors and even a manufacturer of sparkling wine to name but a few. Even the Nobel prize winner for Chemistry in 1920, Walter Nernst (1864–1941), was a member of the corps.

A further name change of the corps followed on the occasion of the Kaiser's birthday, January 27, 1914 to the "Imperial Volunteer Automobile Corps." It is noteworthy here too, that there was a Bavarian and, from 1906 on, a Saxonian Voluntary Automobile Corps. There were fewer members in these corps. However, their objectives were the same as the Prussian corps.

The First World War

On July 31, 1914 the Kaiser announced the situation of "threatening war." One day later a general military mobilization was directed. The German Army had only a few automobiles available at the beginning of the war. Members of the corps were put into action on all fronts. They even brought their own mechanics, who were also well placed in the status of non-commissioned officers. The corps served the role of transportation of high-ranking staff officers, reporting services, transport of enlisted ranks and materials, as well as First Aid Services.

Cyril Brown, an American journalist, has provided insight into the utilization of the Imperial Automobile Corps. This talented man remained at the main headquarters, against all German instructions of course before America entered the war.

In his article for *The New York Times* he doesn't reveal the name of where he was, but we know it is Charleville. In his vividly and excitingly written report he expressly draws attention to the presence of the Chief of the Volunteer Automobile Corps under the military commanders in chief. He describes the Kaiser's journeys to the front, in a motor vehicle, a Kaiser who had lost some of his



Prince Heinrich with his family, his son Waldemar in DFAC uniform

pre-war pomp. He describes the attitude of the German troops as being correct, sometimes even friendly. But let's hear how he reported it himself.

" ... Here one gets more and more the impression that the Germans in their war-making have learned a lesson from the hustling Americans—that they have managed to graft American speed to their native thoroughness, making a combination hard to beat. For instance, there is a regular relay service of high-power racing motor cars between the Great Headquarters and Berlin, the schedule calling for a total running time of something under a day and a half, beating the best time at present possible by train by four hours.



Regulation uniform of the DFAC

One of the picked drivers, who has the last lap—through France—said his running schedule required him to average sixty miles an hour, and this running at night. A network of fast relay automobile services is also run from the Great Headquarters, through Belgium, linking up Brussels and Antwerp, and to the principal points on the long line of battle.

How great a rôle the motor car plays among the Germans may be gathered from an estimate made to the writer that 40,000 cars were in use for military purposes. Many thousands of these are private automobiles operated by their wealthy owners as members of the Volunteer War Automobile Corps, of which Prince Waldemar, son of the sailor Prince Henry, is chief. Their ranks include many big business men, captains of industry, and men of social promi-nence and professional eminence. They wear a distinctive uniform, that of an infantry officer, with a collar of very dark red, and a short, purely ornamental sword or dagger."

This is one of the best and most accurate descriptions of the corps and its sidearm in the time of the Great War.

Integration into the Imperial Kraftfahr-Korps

With the war stubbornly raging on, the ordinary Imperial Kraftfahr-Korps, a purely motorized military organization of the Army, took over the previously elite men's club, the KFAC, by AKO on July 6, 1916. The Kraftfahr-Korps also absorbed the members of the Royal Saxonian and Bavarian Voluntary Automobile Corps. With the conversion to the Kraftfahr-Korps, the lofty position of the gentlemen drivers from pre-war times was over. KFAC members enjoyed officer status only and not genuine military rank. Therefore after absorbtion into the KKfK former KFAC members were demoted to ordinary soldiers and required to undergo eight weeks of basic military training.

The re-founding of the Imperial Automobile Club followed, naturally under a different title, in 1919. It was renamed the German Automobile Club (Automobilclub von Deutschland—AvD).

Daggers of the Automobile Corps

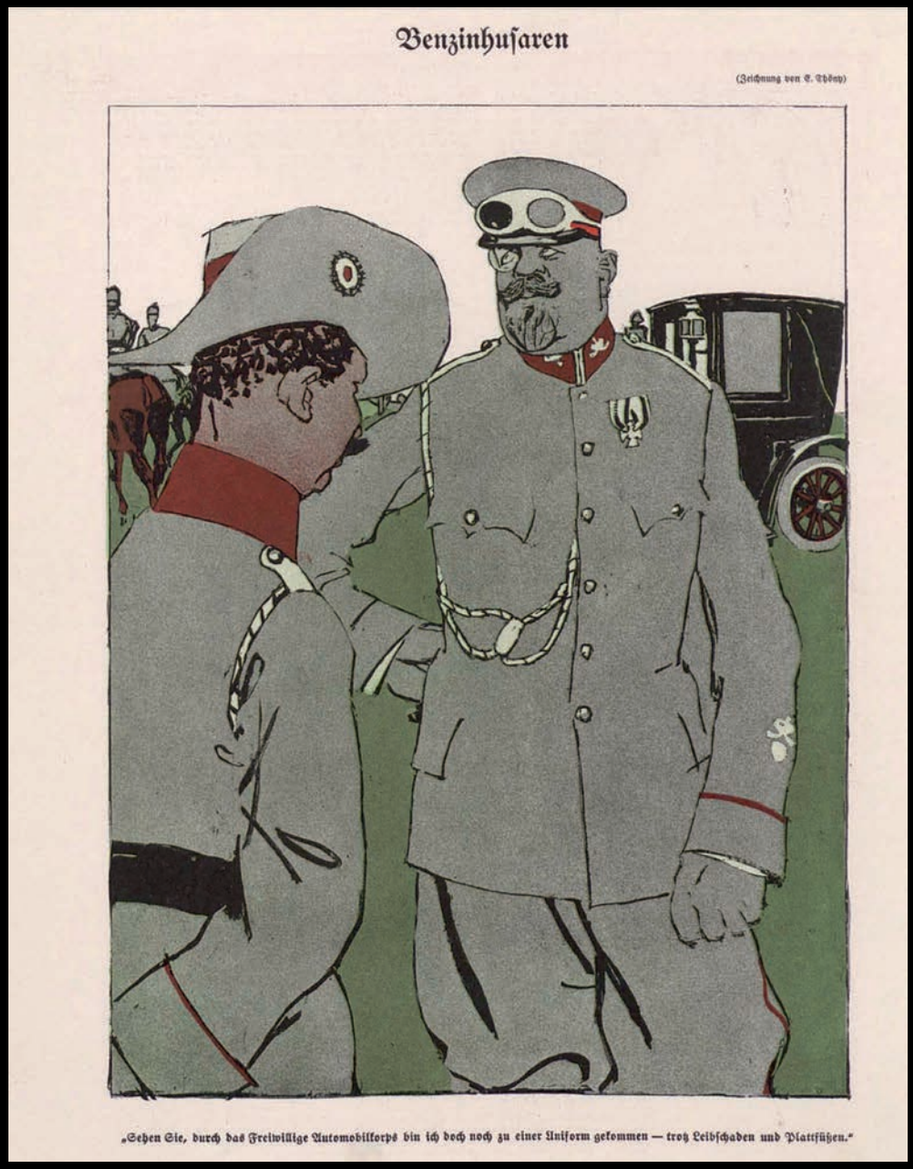
The dagger which was transformed from a civilian to military sidearm went through a number of configuration changes. In the ca. 1916 KKfK regulations the dagger to be worn is described as containing a 30 centimeter long, pointed, sharpened, tapered blade. Cross guard with two knob-shaped ends, silver wire stretched around an ivory grip, concluding with a silver-plated Kaiser crown. In the center of the cross guard, a gold-plated 1.5 cm long horn. The scabbard is further described as brown leather with silver-plated fittings with the top fitting containing a hook open from the bottom.

Every Imperial German edged-weapon collector will immediately recognize that the regulation is describing the Automobile Corps dagger along with the bayonet 98/05 as official sidearms of the KKfK. The dagger adopted and worn was the pattern developed after 1912. This dagger was copied directly from the long model, open-crown pommel naval officer dagger, with the exception that these daggers contained silver fittings, and the horn emblem of the organization was placed in the centre of the cross guard and a brown leather scabbard.

Preceding the wartime K.Kf.K dagger were a variety of other Auto Corps dagger patterns. Commencing in 1905 with the establishment of the DFAC, the sidearm to be worn was a large ivory-

handled hunting cutlass. This beautiful weapon was nearly 24 inches long. The hilt consisted of an ivory grip with vertical grooves and 3 silver acorns pinned to the obverse. The metal fittings of the hilt were nickel silver. The cross guard retained the classic medieval cross shape. A grooved top and clamshell butt plate completed the hilt. The brown leather scabbard containing two hanger rings, throat and bottom fitting completed the weapon. The choice of materials for this hunting cutlass continued into the Auto Corps daggers. When looking at the variety of Auto Corps daggers it is interesting to see their close relationship with naval daggers of the same period. It is most likely coincidence but early naval officers also wore a hirschfänger before the adoption of the dirk in 1848.

The Auto Corps Hirschfänger is photographed being worn as late as 1912. Concurrently with the wear of the cutlass a dagger was being developed and worn. While there have been no period regulations discovered on the earliest Auto Corps daggers it is hypothesized from existing examples that they were first produced with closed-crown naval-style 1890 pommels, imitating the development of the navy dagger. Further imitating naval daggers, early Auto Corps examples exist with ivory baluster-shaped grips that were produced without wire wrapping. Closed-crown Auto Corps daggers are seen, as with later Auto Corps daggers fitted with a cross guard which may or may not contain the gold-plated brass horn. The scabbards of these early closed-crown daggers follow the patterns set by the hirschfänger, being of brown leather with silver fittings, the top fitting displaying the bayonet type hook. The KKfK regulations specified that the portepée to be worn with the dagger is silver with black and red stripes.



"Gasoline Hussars" in Simplicissimus



Bavarian Auto Corps Dagger



Bavarian Auto Corps Dagger

In about 1913 Weyersberg, Kirschbaum & Co. crafted this near-mint Bavarian Auto Corps officer dagger. All mounts are silver-plated brass fittings. The genuine ivory grip is wrapped with twisted silver wire. The pommel is a facsimile of the Bavarian Royal Crown with its Royal Orb and eight arches of the Wittelsbach dynasty. The naval dagger style capstan cross guard is without an organizational designation, not uncommon for Auto Corps daggers.

The upper scabbard fitting of the dyed brown leather scabbard contains the regulation frog stud. The blade is polished steel without nickel plating. The Bavarian infantry portepée was authorized to be worn with these daggers. This silver bullion portepée strap and acorn dot is interwoven with light blue silk to designate the colors of Bavaria. A rare bullion Bavarian Auto Corps cap badge is also shown.









German Automobile Corps (DFAC) Hirschfänger





DFAC members during a maneuver



DFAC members in the Kaisermanuver 1908



Prince Heinrich as DFAC commander







Bavarian Automobile Corps Dagger of Reichsfreiherr Friedrich Erdmann von Reitzenstein


W
1914



Reichsfreiherr Friedrich Erdmann von Reitzenstein in SS uniform

Bavarian Automobile Corps Dagger of Reichsfreiherr Friedrich Erdmann von Reitzenstein

The first member of the Corps who received the Iron Cross, 1st Class, was the Imperial Baron Friedrich Erdmann von Reitzenstein. He also took part in the attempted coup orchestrated by Hitler in Munich in 1923 and later became SS Standartenführer. He was born on November 29, 1888 in Dillingen, on the Danube river and married Elisabeth von Heimburg. Reitzenstein died in July 1969 in Inning, Bavaria.

He carried a Bavarian-style dagger, recognizable by the large crown of the Royal House of Wittelsbach. The House of Wittelsbach ruled in Bavaria until 1918.

When considering the small size of the Bavarian Automobile Corps and the fact that the owner is documented as receiving the first Iron Cross 1st Class, this named dagger is one of the rarest of its type. The weapon itself is a fine example of the ornate Bavarian dagger with the owner's name finely chiseled on the rear of the nickel-plated steel upper scabbard fitting. All parts are numbered "57". This dagger would be the centerpiece of any Kraftfahr Corps Dagger display.


W
1914
Friedr. Erdm. Baumgarten
2. Reitermeister
1915


Friedr. Erdm. Reichsfreihr
v. Reitzenstein
1915
W
1914

Transitional Prussian Auto Corps Dagger with Damascus Blade





Transitional Prussian Auto Corps Dagger with Damascus Blade

This dagger represents an evolutionary step in the bladed sidearms of the Prussian Auto Corps. When the DFAC was established in 1905, the informally adopted sidearm was similar to a hunting cutlass or hirschfänger. It had characteristic features of a traditional large hirschfänger with a slab-sided blade and cruciform hilt.

Over time a more conveniently sized weapon with hilt features similar to the Imperial Navy officer dagger was also worn. The capstan cross guard, ivory grip and crown pommel were similar to the navy dagger but lacked the nautical motif. Instead, a horn or an unadorned cross guard block was the only indication that it was not a naval dagger hilt. The straight hirschfänger or bayonet-style scabbard was retained. Blades from this transitional period can exhibit the slab-sided blade of the earlier sidearms, but double-edged, diamond-shaped blades similar to naval daggers are also encountered. These transitional daggers are seen being carried concurrently with the earlier hirschfänger.

This desirable example has a rare slab-sided blade and is fashioned from hand-forged Damascus steel. The hilt has the classic look of an Imperial Navy dagger and is composed of silver-plated brass. The wire-wrapped ivory grip mimics a naval officer dagger and is a common characteristic of later-model Auto Corps daggers. An interesting feature of these early transitional pieces is the crudely formed closed-crown pommel. Later examples usually have the more highly detailed and crisply cast open-crown pommels.








M. NEUMANN. HOFLIEFERANT. BERLIN



Prussian Aero Corps Dagger



The Early Prussian Aviators and their Daggers

Early Technical Development of Motorized Flight

The first person to repeatedly, and more or less safely, fly a machine into the air that was neither balloon nor airship was Otto Lilienthal, a German. The gliding apparatus that he constructed, which he took off with from a hill (he termed it "airfield") were basically gliders (as we would recognize them). With these he made thousands of short gliding flights until he suffered a fatal crash in 1896.

The Wright brothers constructed a motor-driven airplane built on the knowledge of Otto Lilienthal, and proceeded to make history with the first engine flight on December 17, 1903. Apparently a German/American, Gustav Weißkopf, made a motorized flight two years earlier—but this is only according to an eyewitness report. After that, in November 1903, still a month before the alleged first motorized flight in history, Karl Jatho from Hannover in northern Germany covered a distance of 60 meters with his much-improved version of a motorized Kite Nr. 2.

The Imperial Aero Club

Private organizations began to form very quickly where early technology enthusiasts like car drivers and aviators could join in. The German (later the Imperial) Automobile Club was established in 1899, and on December 21, 1907 the German Aero Club was founded. His Highness Prince Ernst of Sachsen-Altenburg was chosen as President.

In a General Meeting on March 5, 1908, the clubhouse in Berlin at Nollendorfplatz 3 (the former Hanjery Palace) was inaugurated. There was also a clubhouse at Johannisthal airfield, which was the first German airfield and opened on September 26, 1909.

From the stands of the much-used clubhouse, one could see the maneuvering area particularly well.

On September 7, 1909 the German Emperor Kaiser Wilhelm II took over the patronage of the Club, which named itself thereafter as the Imperial Aero Club. His son, the Crown Prince, became Honorary President.

In 1910 a blue club uniform was introduced, which was worn on the airfield, during flights and at club meetings. It comprised a navy blue jacket with a waistcoat and trousers of the same color. The jacket had two rows of black buttons with the club emblem, each row having four buttons. The club cap showed the emblem of the Imperial Aero Club. The club members came from the upper classes, were officers, industrialists and true flight enthusiasts.

Ferdinand Graf von Zeppelin (1838–1917) was also a member of the Imperial Aero Club.

There were also women in the Aero Club. The best-known was Amelie Beese, known as Mellie Beese, who flew a Rumpler "Taube" ("Dove"). She was the first woman in Germany to apply for a pilot's license. She submitted her application on her 25th birthday, September 13, 1911.

Several flying schools rejected her, male flying-school colleagues sabotaged her efforts, and yet despite all this, she passed her tests with flying colors and received her license. On September 26, 1911 she achieved a flight at 825 meters altitude for the duration of 2.5 hours. This was the record on both counts, for female aviators with a passenger.

Ms. Beese was a sculptress but joined the Imperial Aero Club as a pilot and was registered as such in the membership records, just before war broke out in 1914. She was a daring woman who later married the French aviator and design engineer Charles Boutard. Boutard went into a detention camp in Germany at the beginning of the war, and Mellie Beese lost her pilot's license for the duration of the war.

A new start after 1918 failed; then, divorced from her husband, she injured herself very badly in 1925 in a crash landing. Three days before Christmas of that same year she shot herself, after leaving behind the words, "flying is necessary, living isn't."

Surely one of the most remarkable Club members was the Dutch aircraft design engineer Anthony Fokker, who also constructed military planes for Germany during the First World War.

Fokker was popular with the fighter pilots because he was the only engineer who spoke with them on the front and who listened to their suggestions about improvements. He became famous for the invention of a synchronization mechanism that enabled the fighter pilots to shoot through the rotating propeller blades. An ingenious innovation, it apparently only took him two days to develop.

Important Aero Club Members

Hellmuth von Moltke, the General Chief of Staff of the German Army, who was Vice President of the Club.

The designing engineer of the first military-used monoplane, "Taube," Edmund Rumpler.

Baron Rudolf von Brandenstein, founder member and former Chief Staff Officer of the German Voluntary Automobile Corps and later Director of the German Arms and Ammunition factory (DWM).

August Euler, a businessman from Frankfurt am Main, who applied for the first German pilot's license on February 1, 1910.

Beyond these we find military personnel like von Seeckt, bankers like Oppenheim, factory owners like Krupp, von Bohlen and Halbach, alongside aviators like Captain Franz Geerdtz, the squadron leader of the aircraft Battalion 3 in Hannover, northern Germany, one of the first four German military pilots, as well as Oswald von Richthofen—brother of the famous fighter pilot.

There were extremely close connections between the Imperial Aero Club and the Imperial Automobile Club. Nearly all Club flying competitions were hosted by both organizations.

Early military developments

Support for heavier-than-air flight for military application began modestly as the Zeppelin which had been developed by Germany and had proven its utility in military maneuvers, was favored by the War Ministry. This was based largely on the dominance of its creator, Graf Zeppelin, as well as on its tried and tested long-term flight performance. It was believed that German airships had an advantage over the French ones. This alleged belief was not easy to shake off.

However, the War Ministry supported the Berlin Aviation Association (Verein für Luftfahrt) and the Imperial Aero Club in 1900 with funding of 18,000 Reichsmarks. Military administration stepped forward and established the fist German airfield at Johannisthal. An annual subsidy of 20,000 Reichsmarks was paid by the military administration to the airfield company in Johannisthal.

At the beginning of 1910 the German armed forces began to consider making more military use of motor-driven aircraft. The available flying aircraft at that time were seen primarily as reconnaissance and observation machines due to their operational range and load capacity.

The first military flying school was set up in Döberitz, near Berlin, by May 1910. An "Albatross," a copy of the French Farman III, was the first military machine stationed there. This very early German military airplane, which was strongly influenced by those of the Wright brothers, can also be seen on the blade decoration of the aviator dagger introduced in this book.

There were merely four flying cadets of officer rank on duty in the beginning, apart from seven soldiers as maintenance personnel. These first four military pilots were First Lieutenant Mackenthun, Lieutenant von Tarnoszy, Captain de le Roi and First Lieutenant Geerdtz, who applied for their military pilot's licenses in August and September 1910. Wolfram de le Roi was an enthusiastic patron of the military air force in Germany. He and Geerdtz were members of the Aero Club. Other officers on active duty, discharged or those on holiday leave, went into training at their own expense, to become aircraft pilots. In this capacity they offered their services to the armed forces.

The Imperial Navy began in 1911 to create seaplane bases on the Northsea and Baltic coasts, a year later they succeeded in starting from and landing on the water with a Farman "swim" double-decker.

On April 1, 1911 the "Inspektion des Militär-Luft und Kraftfahrwesens" (Inspection of Military Air and Motorized Automobile Service) was founded. A military institution intended to utilize the new technologies of motor-car and aircraft engines for military purposes.

In 1912 the German Kaiser started an Air Fund (the proceeds: 7.5 million gold Marks) with a view to building up the air combat force as well as an efficient aircraft industry. For this purpose special postage stamps and postcards were issued and sold. With the money raised, the German Research Institute for Aviation was founded, still in existence today. From the files we note that there is another, perhaps even more important, aim of this fundraising. As in England in 1940, the most pressing problem was not the manufacture of aircraft; but the training of military pilots. For this reason a meeting was held under the Chairmanship of the Ministry Director Dr. Lewald on November 18, 1912 where representatives of the military forces and government attended. It was laid down that the prime objective of the Air Fund was for pilots to receive training for military purposes. As the funds should not flow into the general military finances, this training was meant for civilian pilots who would be reporting voluntarily. A "Voluntary Flying Corps" was, in effect, formed at this time.

Prince Heinrich Flights

In the years 1913 and 1914 the so-called Prince Heinrich Flights took place. Prince Heinrich Albert Wilhelm of Prussia was a brother of the Kaiser, and great supporter of technology, connected with land, sea and air. This technically very gifted man was, besides his duties as an Admiral, also Commander in Chief of the German Voluntary Automobile Corps, and as a pilot, also a member of the Imperial Aero Club. Under competitive conditions the Prince Heinrich Flights served to give civilian and military pilots the chance to compare their skills. Long routes over the whole of Germany were undertaken during which various tasks had to be fulfilled. For this purpose several military units did practice flights in the same areas, at the same time. The pilots and their observers had to try to find certain detachments in certain areas and also specific landmarks on the ground. Sometimes this was achieved with immense success. It is interesting to see how a civilian sporting event reshaped itself into a military exercise.

Aviation technology developed rapidly. As early as November 1914 the Technical Transport Inspection Commision was experimenting with aircraft that could be navigated by remote control through the use of cordless telegraphy; today's radio signal. Alongside these developments the War Ministry did not overlook the increasing number of civilian aviators.

Preliminaries for a Voluntary Air Corps and the Recruiting of Civilian Pilots for Military Service

It was on January 19, 1911 that the War Ministry gave the Kaiser a report regarding considerations to expand the German Voluntary Automobile Corps, a group of civilian yet ranking officers as automobile owners (who were prepared for action in the case of war), with an Air Corps.

In the German archives in Berlin there is a file that was opened on February 17, 1914 which reveals that the Royal Prussian War Minister, as well as the supervising Chief of Staff recommended the Trustee Director of the National Air Fund to establish an Imperial Voluntary Air Corps. Copies went to the Royal Sachsen and Bavarian military authorized persons. Further copies went to the Chief of Staff of Transport, the State Secretary of the Navy and to Prince Heinrich, brother of the German Kaiser, Navy Admiral and Chief of Staff of the German Voluntary Automobile Corps. However, the formal founding ceremony appeared to have been interrupted by the beginning of the war.

Recruitment and Obligations of Civilian Pilots

Even without such a formal establishment of the corps, up until the outbreak of war, civilian pilots were recruited to qualify as military pilots, through the Trusteeship of the Air Fund. They were obliged by contract by the Inspection of Air and Automobile Units, directly afterwards, to be available as a pilot and observer in the case of war. They also had to name a mechanic liable for military service who should arrive with him for duty. If the person owned an aircraft, it should also be readily operational. Basically, it was the same kind of recruitment as for the German Voluntary Automobile Corps.

Since 1813 in the Prussian Army, and after 1871 in the rest of the country, it was possible to fulfill a one-year voluntary military service when one was especially either scientifically or technically qualified. Upon completion of this period of service, the man became a non-commissioned officer. By fulfilling certain maneuvers, the rank of Reserve Lieutenant could be achieved.

In addition to the suitability of being a pilot, only the completion of a specific course would be required. This training could be carried out parallel to regular pilot-instruction of military personnel within military departments and at aircraft manufacturing depots where a secure sales factor appeared promising.

In this way, it was not only possible to fund further training to nearly two hundred aviators from the Air Fund in 1913 and 1914, they would, as one-year volunteers, in fact be taken on in military service.

Looked at more closely, this was an extremely effective way of putting civilians who desired military "value" and recognition under obligation to serve their country. Reporting voluntarily was rewarded with the coveted status "Reserve Officer." What this really meant during the First World War, particularly for the airmen on the front, may not always have been perfectly clear for those technical enthusiasts at that time.

Prussian Aviator Daggers

It is a fact that early Prussian aviators carried daggers, as testified by a witness.

He is a witness who can no longer give us his words, as nearly 100 years have passed, but his experiences certainly appear utterly remarkable. He undertook something that helps us today to understand these daggers.

This witness was an observer, a flying officer, who risked his life with his pilot despite rain,

snow or heat in a tight-fitting open aircraft during the Great War, in order to give reports about the ground movements of the enemy. He showed a soldier's courage, which he both admired and respected in his counterpart.

It was not without reason that they were dubbed "knights of the air" in the First World War. This officer received an honor, the Iron Cross. In order to mark this very noteworthy moment, and perhaps as a keepsake for his family, friends and comrades, he went (perhaps the same day) to a photo studio shortly after having received this decoration and had his picture taken.

At that time a successful portrait was a complicated matter: photograph plates had to be prepared, the necessary lighting was difficult and tedious work, the subject of the photo had to spend several hours waiting in the studio. Despite this, "our" observer went along to the studio, in full uniform, with the medal—the Iron Cross with its awarding ribbon—still on his uniform. On top he wore his pilot's leather jacket, showing his flying commitment. Also, he attached the goggles artistically to his pilot's cap as he wanted to display that he was a combat pilot.

He is carrying a dagger as a sidearm, which as an officer, he has adorned with a portepée. He is not carrying a bayonet, the usual weapon of a regular soldier, or the sword of an infantry officer. No, he is wearing this so rare and unmistakable dagger with his uniform. Pride flows from him. We see that as a civilian pilot he has voluntarily offered his services as pilot and observer for his fatherland.

So now after about 100 years he stands looking at us. He proves more than any clothing regulation or from what any dusty archive file can ever tell us, that early German pilots carried these distinctive daggers.



Sidearms of the German flyers

The sidearms of the Kaiserliche Aero flyers are many and varied just as with the Kaiserliche Automobile Corps.

It is essentially the same standard production dagger in all respects, with the substitution of a propeller on the cross guard for the standard horn.

The Aero daggers followed the Automobile Corps pattern exactly. Therefore, the dagger retained exactly the same dimensions as the Automobile Corps dagger. The early daggers of the period 1910–11 have turned ivory grips with a single steel wire wrap. A closed crown pommel completed the hilt. One of these early closed-crown daggers is pictured here being worn by a decorated wartime aero officer complete with knot. These initial production daggers were mounted in nickel silver or silver-plated brass. The scabbards were produced in brown leather, either dyed or painted. The scabbard fittings were also nickel silver or brass and the top mount was fitted with either a frog stud or a combination of frog stud and a horizontal wear ring configuration. Blades on these early daggers could be ordered either plain or etched. Blades could also be ordered with or without nickel plating.

As yet, no record of an official Aero portepée has been discovered. The picture of the Aero officer above does show him wearing a standard Prussian sword portepée with his dagger. This same portepée wear has been observed on Automobile Corps daggers. This writer has observed that every aero dagger he has seen shows portepée wear on the cross guard arms.

During the exciting pre-war period the "esprit de corps" of the early airmen was at an all-time high and private purchase daggers with embellished blades were in fashion. The etched bladed dagger featured in this book is an outstanding example of one of these coveted weapons.

At the beginning of the war, we begin to see nickel-plated iron mounts. All other features of the pre-war dagger remained the same.





Imperial pilot and observer badges



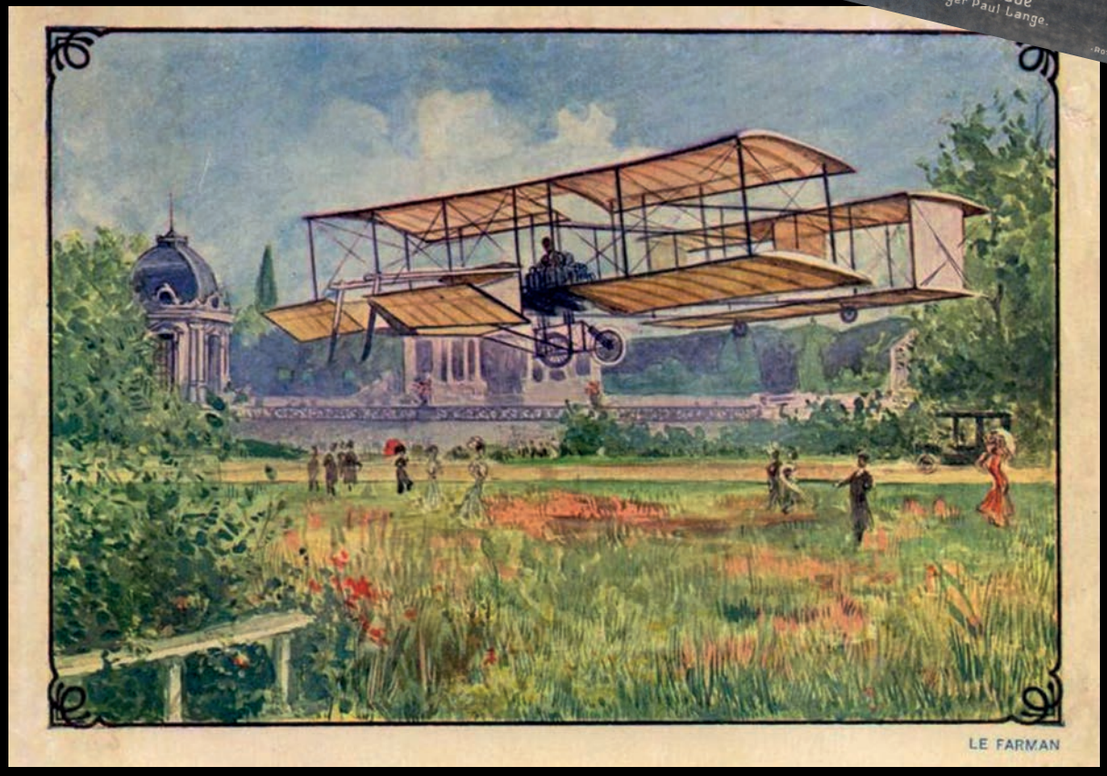








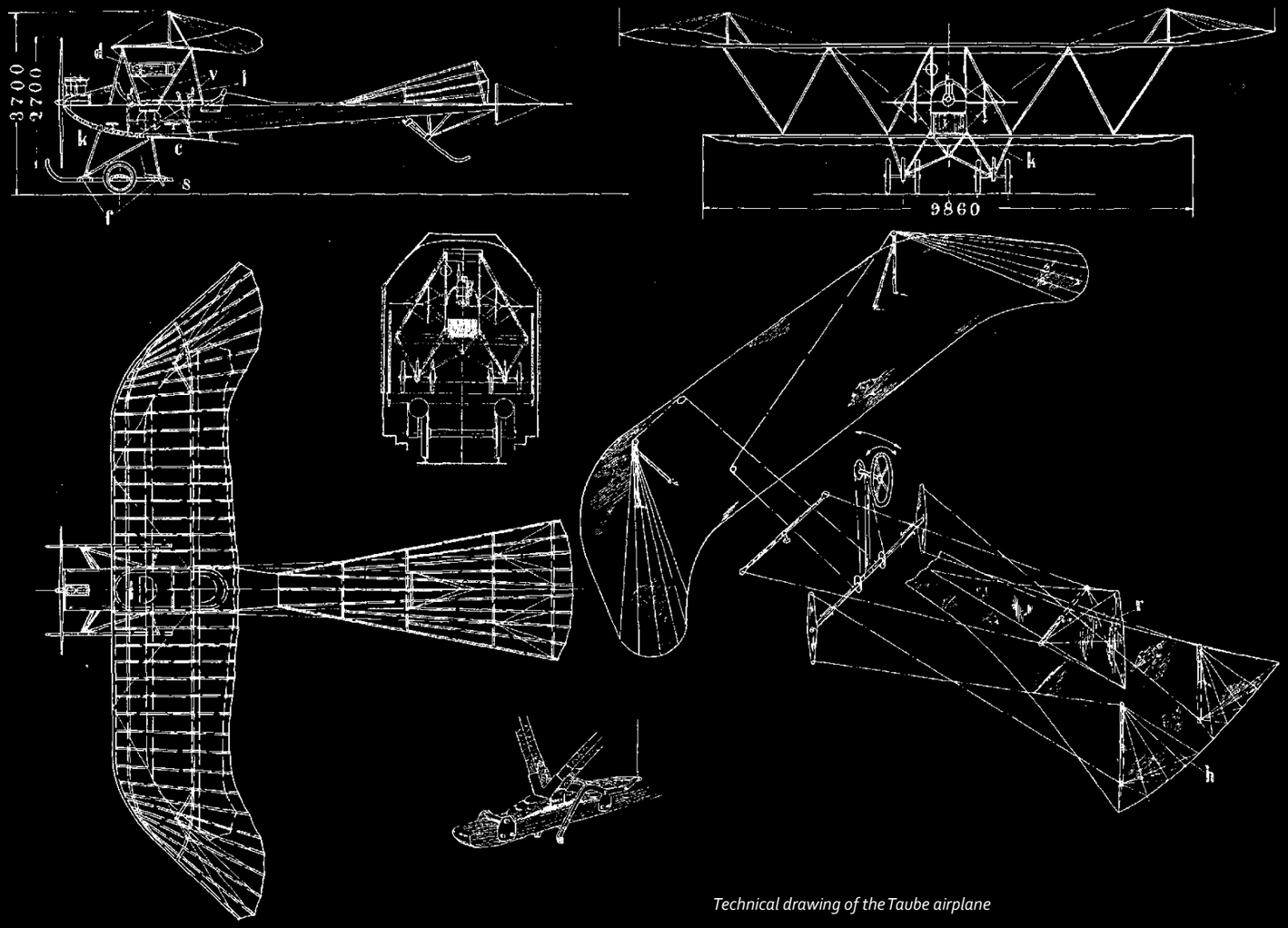




Albatros Flyer







Technical drawing of the Taube airplane

Military Daggers from 1933–1945



Edged Weapons of the Nazi Period

After the First World War, the Weimar Republic government struggled to effectively address German unemployment and poor business climate resulting in political turmoil. These very difficult conditions were due to the devastating economic and social effects of the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles and later compounded by the Great Depression. The resulting privations resulted in a fragmented Germany and fertile political ground for the rooting and ascension to power of the Nazi Party. The organization achieved control of the government under the leadership of Adolf Hitler in March 1933, marking the beginning of the Third Reich. This also ushered in a totalitarian regime and the cessation of all democratic principles.

A key objective of the NSDAP was a nationalistic effort to draw together the existing disparate factions of the German peoples that were left disillusioned by the harsh economic and political turmoil of the 1920s to early 1930s into a singular identity. The NSDAP very adeptly employed party symbolism and colorful pageantry to inspire pride and project a renewed and cohesive German spirit of the German people. The edged weapon was ubiquitous in the culture of the Third Reich.

The Nazi government naturally administered all governmental and diplomatic functions as well as all military forces. Eventually however, most if not all significant civilian social services and organizations were subsumed by the NSDAP, resulting in many paramilitary organizations permeated by the Nazi political doctrine and administered by the government. All government, military and most paramilitary organizations were authorized to carry their own distinctive edged weapons to complement their uniforms in the military tradition. These weapons including daggers, swords and dress bayonets, were largely of a symbolic nature and served to denote rank and promote esprit de corps.

The period 1933 to 1945 marked the greatest era of edged weapons production in German history in terms of numbers and variety. Production from the blade manufacturers of the city of Solingen totaled in the millions during the 12 years of the Third Reich. In 1933 the German armed forces were of a nominal strength as dictated by the Versailles Treaty. After Hitler assumed power, the rearmament of the Germany military began with a rapid expansion of trained personnel and procurement of the latest military technology and hardware.

This rapid expansion placed huge demands for edged weapons. Major blade manufacturers quickly modernized and often employed mass production and assembly-line techniques to increase output. Standardization was more common during the Third Reich as compared to the

Imperial period when each weapon was largely a one-off custom example crafted by a guild of professional artisans.

Custom examples with Damascus blades, blue and gold dedications and ornate fittings were still available at extra cost during the Third Reich, but contradict the Nazi ideology of people's community. Ivory grips are very rarely seen as Germany had to forfeit her colonies that were the source for ivory per the Versailles Treaty. Damascus, folded steel hand-forged blades were still highly revered during the period with some of the most spectacular works of edged weapon art ever created forged in the era. These extra cost features were very costly during the period and remain so today. Personalization of a sword or dagger was much less common than in the Imperial period. If a personalization was made, it is much more discreetly placed on the weapon so as not to attract attention.

While a discussion of all of the various edged weapon patterns authorized for wear by the many organizations of the Third Reich is beyond the scope of this book, many of the various forms worn by the military forces are shown. Again emphasis is placed on personalized examples of historical interest and context.

The Army (Heer) Dagger

The Army officer dress dagger is one of the most commonly available, having been produced in enormous quantity by almost all of the large Solingen blade makers. To a casual observer and even to many collectors one looks much like another. In detail however, this is most certainly not the case as many larger makers had their own distinctive fittings and variations over time.

Originally designed by Paul Cassberg, an employee of the large Carl Eickhorn Company, the design of the dress dagger for the Army was officially approved in 1934. This iconic cross guard pattern of the NSDAP eagle and swastika superimposed on a volute was to remain unchanged throughout the period. A pommel cap of oak leaves top grips ranging from white to dark orange depending on exposure to the elements. All metal furniture including the pebbled scabbard was silver-plated.

In 1933 the German Army was limited to 100,000 men and not the vast service that it was to become. It is generally considered that production commenced very early in 1935. However, it is probable that Eickhorn and a couple of other leading manufacturers were ahead of the game and began production as early as late 1934.

The earliest Army daggers produced were hand crafted in the traditional manner and many exhibit numerous embellishments and fine details that enhance the castings produced by the craftsmen who were as much artist as artisan. Initial production daggers were usually brass based but makers rapidly shifted to less strategic metal alloys. The early Army daggers that were produced in small numbers between late 1934 and early 1936 are scarce. Thereafter the major companies who continued manufacturing throughout the period changed the initial design of their cross guards variously throughout production as they adapted to the requirements of mass production.

The Navy (Kriegsmarine) Dagger

Naval traditions are deeply rooted and slow to change in all of the world's navies. In Germany the same was true. The 1929 pattern Reichmarine dagger adopted during the Weimar period continued to be worn by officers and high ranking non-commissioned officers throughout the early years of the Third Reich. The most notable features of this pattern are the straight-arm cross guard with a center quillion block containing a fouled anchor, white wire-wrapped grip and globular pommel of reed bundle over cresting waves. The most common scabbard design was the so-called engraved "lightning bolt" pattern followed by the deluxe "hammered" pattern. All of the furniture was gold-gilded brass. Most dagger blades had an etched pattern of a maritime motif containing a fouled anchor. All daggers were worn with a silver portepée tied in a complex knot around the hilt with the exception of officer candidates.

By 1935, the expansion of the German Navy was in full bloom in direct defiance of the Versailles Treaty. The name of the navy was changed from the Reichsmarine to the Kriegsmarine, better representing its renewed capability as a modern military force.

In the early 1930s the appearance of yellow grips that slowly changed to darker shades of orange when exposed to the elements, are seen. Additionally, with the improving economy and rapid expansion of the Navy, deluxe privately purchased custom daggers were more frequently ordered. Similar to the Imperial period, options included the full range of extra cost features such as ivory grips, folded-steel Damascus blades, custom hand-chased scabbards and dedications.

Finally in 1938, naval dagger regulations were updated to bring them in line with the daggers of the Army (Heer) and Air Force (Luftwaffe) by incorporating the symbol of the NSDAP into its design. Effective on Hitler's birthday April 20, 1938, the pommel of the navy dagger was changed to the NSDAP symbol of an eagle holding a wreath surrounding a swastika. Existing daggers were updated by simply changing the pommel. The replacement pommels could be privately purchased or acquired through supply depots. Old pommels were recycled for their brass and therefore few survive today.

Navy daggers were produced in vast numbers during the Third Reich although personalized daggers are relatively scarce. Custom-order daggers with deluxe features such as hand-chased scabbards, Damascus steel blades and ivory grips are rare. It should be noted here that collectors must be extremely cautious when considering acquisition of one of these navy custom daggers as well-executed reproductions are not uncommon. The authors urge collectors to first seek expert advice.

The Air Force (Luftwaffe) Dagger

At the beginning of the Third Reich, a national air force was not officially in existence as the requirements of the Versailles Treaty forbade it. However, the advancement of German aviation technology and development of skilled pilots were accomplished by a paramilitary organization formed in March 1933 called the Deutscher Luftsport-Verband (DLV) or German Flying Club. It was initiated to bring under NSDAP administration and nationalization of all of Germany's civilian aviation organizations. The Versailles Treaty allowed only for glider flying with motorized flight under tight restrictions. However, under the auspices of the DLV, German aviation capabilities and development of prototype aircraft progressed sufficiently such that on March 10, 1935 in defiance of the Versailles Treaty, Hitler officially established the German Luftwaffe.

The first dagger pattern carried by the Luftwaffe was adopted from the earlier DLV officer pattern. It has a characteristic cruciform hilt with downward sloping cross guard arms and large pommel reminiscent of medieval knights' swords. The feather-etched cross guard is complemented by a wire-wrapped blue leather grip topped by a disc-shaped pommel featuring a gold swastika in the shape of a sun wheel. A silver portepée is simply wrapped around the hilt. The nickel-mounted scabbard is wrapped in blue leather and is suspended from an integral chain hanger. Lastly, the unadorned blade is nickel-plated.

In October 1937 a new second pattern officer dagger was established. This pattern was a significant departure from the previous pattern. The cross guard featured the Luftwaffe eagle clutching a swastika. Silver wire-wrapped grips varied in color from white and yellow to dark orange due to exposure. The ovoid pommel consisted of a central gold swastika surrounded by oak leaves. The pebbled scabbard featured a terminus of a spray of oak leaves and two oak leaf-embellished scabbard bands. Blades are unadorned and nickel-plated.

These daggers could also be custom ordered with the many deluxe features as aforementioned for Navy and Army daggers including a double-etched blade.

Generally personalized edged weapons are relatively scarce. However, squadron symbols, unit markings and names can occasionally be found that add historical interest.



Heer Daggers







Heer Officer Dagger of Dr. Hubert Abels





Heer Officer Dagger of Dr. Hubert Abels

Named daggers of the German Wehrmacht are quite scarce. It was uncommon, compared to the Imperial time, to present daggers or to adorn them with rank and name. However, some are named and for serious collectors these are the items they are focused on.

This Weyersberg, Kirschbaum & Co. Heer dagger was worn by a veterinarian, Dr. Hubert Abels. He served in Berlin, in the Heer Veterinarian Headquarters and was responsible for the selection of young horses for the Army.



Dr. Abels
1938

Heer Officer Dager of Major Hans-Joachim Hirche







Heer Officer Dagger of Major Hans-Joachim Hirche

This dagger was presented to Hans-Joachim Hirche on October 2, 1940 by the Non-commissioned officers corps likely upon his promotion to Hauptmann. Hirche was the Kompanie-Chef of the First Company of the 169th Battalion garrisoned in Frankfurt on the Oder.

The Solingen firm of Anton Wingen Jr. produced this dagger. The components of Hirche's presentation dagger are characteristic of the later production period. As resources were dedicated to more pressing wartime requirements, alternative materials were employed to produce dagger fittings. The cross guard and pommel are cast in a zinc-based alloy instead of brass as used in the mid-1930s. All hilt fittings and the scabbard are nickel-plated instead of silver utilized on pre-war examples. However, the quality of the blade is as high as earlier examples.

The officers and NCOs of the 169th Infantry Ersatz Battalion also presented this sterling silver cigarette case to Hauptmann Hirche on his 28th birthday.

Hans-Joachim Hirche was born May 29, 1913. His father, Emil Hirche, and his mother lived in Dresden, Holbeinstreet 131, as direct neighbors of Victor Klemperer. Klemperer (9 October 1881–11 February 1960) was a Romance languages scholar who also became known as a diarist. His journals, published in Germany in 1995, detailed his life under the German Empire, the Weimar Republic, Nazi Germany, and the German Democratic Republic. Those covering the period of the Third Reich have since become standard sources and have been extensively quoted by Saul Friedländer, Michael Burleigh, Richard J. Evans, Max Hastings and many others.

Hirche joined the Weimar Reichswehr with the direct support of Victor Klemperer in 1932. Even after the unconditional surrender of the Nazis in 1945, Hans-Joachim kept contact to Victor Klemperer.

Archives indicate that he was promoted to Oberleutnant in January 1938 where he served as an adjutant to a radio and signal detachment. He was promoted to Hauptmann in 1940. In December 1942 he was transferred to the General staff of the IV. Armeekommando and at the end of January 1943 he became commanding officer of the Nachrichtenabteilung 44, an intelligence division which was re-organized after the Battle of Stalingrad.


Unserem lieben Kompanie-
Hauptmann Kirche
zum Geburtstag im Kriegsjahr 1941
Uffz. und Mannschaften
der Genesenden Komp. Ers. Abt. 169
Frankfurt/Oder
Kompanie-Chef
Offizierkompanie
20.2.1940.
SOLINGEN



In January 1944 he was again transferred to the OKH, the Oberkommando des Heeres, which was the High Command of the German Army. He became the responsible staff officer there for intelligence for the 14th Panzer Division, a tank division.

After being destroyed in the battle of Stalingrad, the division was reformed in Brittany, France. By November 1943, it was combat ready, transferring back to Army Group South on the Eastern Front. It now had an additional battalion of StuG assault guns, the III/36 Panzer Regiment. The division was part of Army Group South up to June 1944. In August, after being refitted, it was transferred to Army Group North to the Courland area (now Latvia and Lithuania). The refit included delivery of Panther tanks.

In January 1945, the Red Army launched a number of major offensives across the Eastern Front. Much of Army Group North—including the 14th Panzer Division—was bypassed and became trapped in the Courland Pocket, and remained there until Germany's surrender in May 1945.

Hauptmann Hirche was promoted to the rank of Major in August 1943. Beginning in May 1944, Major Hirche served as the 3rd General Staff Officer of a Division responsible for intelligence within the 7th Army. Later, Major Hirche also served in 1945 as 1c (intelligence) in the 12th Army, also known as "Armee Wenck."

The "Wenck Armee" was named for its young, well-liked and colorful panzer commander General Walter Wenck. The 12th Army was raised in early April 1945 during the battle of Berlin and consisted of only six poorly equipped divisions of largely second-line elements. In a last hope effort, Hitler ordered the 12th Army to move swiftly to the defense of Berlin that was quickly being surrounded by Russian forces. After disengaging from fighting the Americans near the Elbe River, encouraging progress toward Berlin by the 12th Army met with strengthening Russian resistance and the offensive stalled south of Potsdam. By April 27, 12th Army intelligence based on interrogation of POWs reported that Berlin had been completely encircled by the Russians. Thus, the battle of Berlin was considered lost and the end of the war in Europe was in view.

Somehow Hirche managed to escape from the Berlin ruins, and was captured by British troops in the north of Germany. He was detained in the POW Camp Munsterlager near the city of Lüneburg. In 1947 he was transferred to the Camp No. 2223 Munster-Lager, which was the largest POW discharge center in the north of Germany.

Heer Officer Dagger of Hauptmann Willi Lüske




Treue um Treue

Heer Officer Dagger of Hauptmann Willi Lüske

Willi Lüske was born September 8, 1893 in Batensen, a city northwest of Hannover. His ID disk or dog tag, which includes the original unit and "Stammrollnummer," has 3. II./ IR 348, that is 3rd Kompanie, II Battaillon, 348 Infanterie Regiment, based in Hannover, and is part of the 216. Infanterie Division. According to this career summary, in January 1940 Lüske was serving with Fahrkolonne 3/19, that is, part of the 19th Infanterie Division, a horse-drawn unit. German propaganda focused on the highly mechanized units of the Wehrmacht that carried out the Blitzkrieg however, of a total of 264 German combat divisions, only 42 were armored or motorized. Therefore, most of the work was done by horses, who suffered a lot during wartime.

Lüske survived the Second World War as a prisoner of war in Great Britain.

Anton Wingen Jr. Heer daggers are not common. The blade is from mono-steel however the gold-filled engraving is a very nice touch that is seldom encountered. "*Treue um Treue*" is a not uncommon Imperial motto carried forward into the Third Reich era and is reminiscent of the similar Bavarian national motto. In this case, it is on what appears to be a presentation dagger, given by the men of the unit that the Captain served with.





Willi Lüske 2nd and Jakob Ebeling 4th from left


Ihrem Hptm. Lüdke die 5/19.1.10.1940


Treue um Treue



Heer Officer Dagger of Oberst Robert Kaestner





Heer Officer Dagger of Oberst Robert Kaestner

This is the Army Officer dagger belonging to Oberst Robert Kaestner. Robert Kaestner was a highly decorated career soldier and gifted commander, and was awarded the Knight's Cross with Oak Leaves.

This dagger is of itself an interesting piece, although the history of the officer to whom it belonged is more remarkable. The dagger is a very high-quality example though without a manufacturer mark to the blade. In all probability it was assembled by and purchased from a uniform retailer catering to the officer corps.

The hilt fittings are produced by the Eickhorn Company. The cross guard is the third variant that Eickhorn produced and it is perhaps the most distinctive with a larger, triple-layered wreath that makes it instantly recognizable. This cross guard is seldom encountered and was produced for only a short period of time in 1937. The blade of the dagger is a high-quality nickel-plated example remaining in beautiful condition with no plating loss.

Where this dagger becomes rather more interesting is the reverse of the cross guard that has been engraved with the officer's name: R. Kaestner. The name in the form Kaestner is not common and is usually spelled Kästner. A search of this name in the 1939 and 1945 German Army officer *Ranglisten* reveals only one Kaestner. It is not uncommon to encounter named daggers, however very often there is only a surname or a name so common that numerous possibilities make it impossible to attribute the dagger to a specific individual.

Robert Kaestner enlisted into the Reichswehr on October 1, 1931, joining the 14th Company of the 15th Infantry Regiment. On April 1, 1932, he transferred to the 2nd Company of the 15th Infantry Regiment and three years later, on April 1, 1935, into the 6th Company of the 36th Infantry Regiment; whereupon he was promoted to corporal and appointed to be the regimental flag bearer. On October 1, 1936, Kaestner transferred to the 6th Company of the 105th Infantry Regiment where he received his commission to Leutnant on January 18, 1938.

The IR 105 fought in the Western Campaign in 1940 and subsequently from April to July 1941 was involved in actions on the Balkan peninsula where on July 1, Kaestner was appointed commander of the 7th Company.

On June 1, 1942, Kaestner was promoted to Hauptmann and just a month later appointed commander of the 2nd Battalion, IR 105. On April 1, 1943, he was promoted to the rank of Major and Officer Commanding 105th Infantry Regiment. The regiment fought in Brjansk, Kiev and the Korsun-Cherkassy pocket.

For his leadership and the achievements of his regiment Kaestner was awarded the Knight's Cross on December 11, 1943.

In early January 1944 the 105th Grenadier Regiment formed a part of the 72nd Infantry Division that was encircled at Korsun. In mid-February 1944 the division succeeded in breaking out of the Kessel with Kaestner's Grenadier Regiment 105 forming the tip. For the successful "breakout" Major Kaestner was awarded the oak leaves to his Knight's Cross on February 21, 1944 and a promotion to Oberstleutnant on March 1, 1944.

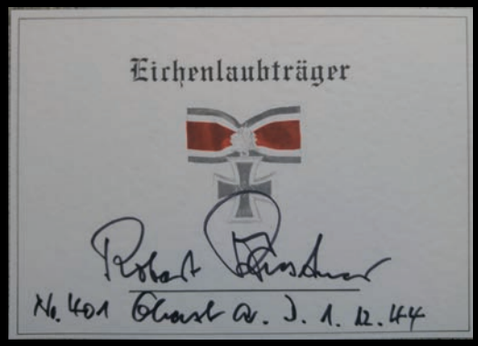
In the fall of 1944 Kaestner attended a divisional commander's course following which on December 1, 1944 he received promotion to Oberst and on the 5th took command of the 905th Infantry Division on the Upper Rhine.

On March 1, 1945, he became commander of the 16th Volks-grenadier Division on the Western Front, a last-ditch troop created mostly of old men and kids.








Eichenlaubträger
No. 401

R. KAESTNER





On May 2, 1945 he was taken into American captivity and either escaped or was released in 1946.

His other military awards were the Close Combat Clasp in gold, Infantry Assault Badge and the Eastern front medal.

Robert Kaestner died aged 77 on November 18, 1990 in Seeshaupt, Oberbayern.

Kriegsmarine (Navy) Daggers







Transitional Imperial Naval Dagger Attributed to Admiral Rolf Carls











Transitional Imperial Naval Dagger Attributed to Admiral Rolf Carls

One of the most remarkable German naval daggers is attributed to the late Admiral Rolf Carls.

As Rolf Carls had a long and distinguished career serving in the Imperial Navy, the Weimar Reichsmarine and the Nazi Kriegsmarine, his dagger went through many transitions.

The dagger was manufactured at the very beginning of the 20th century by Weyersberg, Kirschbaum & Co. in the city of Solingen and was distributed by the Georg Bartling & Sons, a supplier for edged weapons. The grip is made of hand-carved ivory and the blade is folded Damascus steel, hand-forged by the important blade smith Max Dinger.

The dagger was privately purchased in 1903 as an 1890 pattern cadet dagger by Carls. When Carls was promoted to Leutnant zur See in 1906, he had the blade and scabbard shortened slightly by a company to convert the weapon to the easier-to-wear shorter version preferred by many officers during the period. It is highly likely that Carls also changed the Imperial crown pommel to the open finial version.

After the Great War, Carls served in the Weimar Reichsmarine from 1921 on. He probably changed the pommel to the reed bundle version of the Reichsmarine, but many officers still wore their Imperial dagger unchanged until 1938.

Later in the 1930s, he added a Portepée without the black-white-red adorned cords of the Imperial times.

In 1938 he changed the pommel to the Nazi eagle in accordance to the 1938 regulation.

True transitional daggers are hard to find and always a highlight of advanced collections because they reflect naval history at its best.



Admiral Rolf Carls


J.B&S

Rolf Carls was born in Rostock on May 18, 1885. He joined the Imperial Navy in 1903. In 1905 he was assigned to the East-Asia Squadron where in 1906, aboard the cruiser *Breslau*, he cruised to Indonesia and the Dutch East Indies until 1907.

At the beginning of the Great War, while still serving aboard the cruiser *Breslau*, he took part in the breakthrough to the Dardanelles in 1914. In 1917 he commanded the famous U-boat SM *U-9* and later, the SM *U-124*. After the war he was Chief of the Training Division at the Supreme Naval Command and given command of the old battleship *Hessen*.

He was Fleet Commander from 1937 until 1938, when he became Commanding Admiral for the Baltic Sea. At the same time he held the position of Commander-in-Chief of the Naval Group Command East. Afterwards, he served as Chief of the larger Naval Group Command North until 1943. Both Rolf Carls and Karl Dönitz were nominated to succeed Grand Admiral Raeder. Hitler chose Dönitz and later Carls resigned, possibly to prevent friction among the naval leadership.

He was killed in an air raid on April 24, 1945, less than three weeks before the end of the Second World War, in the city of Bad Oldeslohe, where he served as city mayor in the former Präparandeum building.



The building in which Carls was killed in an air raid in April 1945



Admiral Carls presenting awards to officers

Kriegsmarine Dagger of Korvettenkapitän Waldemar Grützmacher





Kriegsmarine Dagger of Korvettenkapitän Waldemar Grützmacher

The Kriegsmarine dagger of Korvettenkapitän Waldemar Grützmacher is typical of the period.

Waldemar Grützmacher was born in Essen on September 13, 1917. He joined the Navy in April 1937. His crew's coat of arms shows two crossed naval daggers with portepèes and the numeral "37." Various German naval submarines with commanders of this year carried this coat of arms as a tower badge.



Waldemar Grützmacher

From April to September 1939 he served as an officer. Directly following this, until June 1940, he was in the 3rd and 7th minesweeping fleet. Following this assignment until August 1940, he was adjutant in the 38th and 36th Minesweeper Fleets. He found application as a mine specialist until March 1941 in the naval jamming office in Trappenkamp, which lies between Hamburg and Kiel. Sea mines were described as jamming objects. In Trappenkamp there was a sea mine factory supervised by naval officers. Here he became the Supervising Officer. After this he served as Training Officer until September 1941 at the Naval Training School Mürwik.

Grützmacher served on the *Doggerbank*, a former British ship that was launched from the Harland & Wolff shipyard in Glasgow as *Speybank* in 1926. It was captured in the Atlantic as a prize by the German ship *Atlantis* under Bernhard Rogge on the evening of January 31, 1941. Renamed *Doggerbank*, this ship had been converted into a mine layer and submarine tender at the shipyard of Forges et Chantier de la Gironde in Bordeaux.

On January 21, 1942 it set sail with Lieutenant Waldemar Grützmacher as specialist jamming weapon officer on board whose responsibilities included sea mine laying. The ship sailed under camouflage as the British ship, the *Levernbank*, a sister ship to the *Speybank*. The set task was to secretly lay mines in the Atlantic around Cape Town and Aguilhas, South Africa and then continue to Japan. Upon the first Allied ship losses through these minefields, the *Doggerbank* withdrew to the South Atlantic in order to avoid enemy contact.

On June 21 the *Doggerbank* rendezvoused with the auxiliary cruiser *Michel* and the tanker *Charlotte Schliemann* whereby the *Michel* received supplies and ammunition. Additionally, 124 captured enemy seamen from ships that the *Michel* had sunk were taken aboard. From the *Charlotte Schliemann* came a further 68 war prisoners. Subsequently the *Doggerbank* sailed through the Indian Ocean to Djakarta, Indonesia and from there to Japan, entering Yokohama harbor on August 19, 1942. Fortunately Waldemar Grützmacher left the ship in September and stayed in Yokohama, where he served in the office of the German naval attaché located in "Helm House,", Yamashita-chō 53, Yokohama.

On December 17 with 365 men on board, the *Doggerbank* set sail for Europe from Yokohama



under the captaincy of Paul Schneidewind. On March 3, 1943 about 100 miles west of the Canary Islands, in an area where no German ship was expected to be, she was accidentally torpedoed by the German submarine *U-43* under Lieutenant Hans-Joachim Schwandtke, at nearly 22:00 hrs. Twenty-six days later a Spanish ship rescued but a single survivor. Among its many exploits, the *Doggerbank* came to literary fame through the book *The Ship with Five Names*, written by Charles Gibson and published in 1965.

In the "Agreement on Military Co-operation" of January 18, 1942, it was agreed between the three-party pact of Germany, Italy and Japan that two German submarines would be given to the Imperial Japanese Navy for training and instruction purposes. Chosen were the *U-511* as well as the *U-1224*. The *U-511* of the modern IXc-type was transferred to Japan in May 1943. It arrived August 7 of the same year. The *U-1224* however, sailed by German-trained Japanese, never reached its destination.



German and Japanese Navy comrades

On December 1, 1943 Grützmacher was promoted to Korvettenkapitän.

German Naval Command had planned the deployment of submarines to the southern China Sea and the Indian Ocean in support of Japan, an important ally. The returning submarines were also to bring back raw materials to Germany. Transport across water was no longer possible due to the closing-in network of Allied marine surveillance. These boats were dubbed the "Monsoon-Group." Bases were to be established in areas occupied by the Japanese. One such base was the harbor of Penang, Malaysia.

Korvettenkapitän Waldemar Grützmacher, who had stayed in Yokohama, was transferred to Penang in December 1944.

In January 1945 he took over command of the base at Penang until May 9,1945. By then the war was over for Germany. Japanese troops took over the ships and submarines that were fit for warfare, according to the contract between Germany and Japan. The German soldiers and former allies were interned as foreigners by Japanese troops. On August 15, 1945, after two horrific atomic bombs from the USA hit Japan, the war in the Pacific ended. Grützmacher became a prisoner of war held by British troops in Singapore. He was released to Germany in April 1947.

From January 1948 until October 1949, he worked as a commercial merchant employee in Bremen. In 1950 he emigrated to Brazil and worked until 1978 as an authorized signatory in a German-Brazilian company. Between 1978 and 1984 he was self-employed as a business consultant and retired in 1985. He was married and had one son.





VIPs visiting Penang base



Grützmacher 1st row, 2nd from right. Yokohama late 1944

The Secret Activities of the German Navy in the Far East in the Second World War

by Axel Dörrenbach

In the early 1930s before the Reichsmarine was renamed Kriegsmarine, the German Navy began to set up secret networks for the overseas supply of raw materials during wartime. This was based on their experiences of the Allied blockade in the First World War. The networks involved were named "Kriegsorganisation" (KO) and "Etappenorganisation." It was later changed to "Marinesonderdienst," frequently abbreviated "Sonderdienst"—or just "MSD."

The MSD headquarters were located at the "Ausland IV" department of the "Amtsgruppe Ausland" section in the "Amt Ausland/Abwehr" office of the "OKW" (German military high command) at Berlin W 35, Tirpitzufer 72–76. Actually, the MSD acted under the command of the "Admiralquartiermeister" at the "Seekriegsleitung" Supreme naval war staff (SKL) in the OKM (German Navy high command), "Amtsgruppe III Nachschub u. Betriebsstoffbewirtschaffung," i.e. the supply department. In other words, for reasons of security the MSD belonged to the Abwehr (secret service) in the OKW, under the command of Admiral Canaris. However, all personnel were Navy officers and received their orders exclusively from the supreme naval war staff.

The "Sonderdienst" had the following tasks and duties: supplying (buying, warehousing, commissioning, shipping) important warfare raw materials from overseas and transport by blockade runners (and later U-boats) supplies and mail exchange and support of auxiliary cruisers (and later U-boats) in the Atlantic, Indian and Pacific Oceans.

In overseas countries these tasks were locally organized by mainly German expatriates with navy backgrounds, such as retired officers, working as senior managing employees in shipping lines such as HAPAG or NDL and trading houses such as C. Illies, all under the surveillance of the local German naval attaché with the German embassy.

After the outbreak of war the pre-war network, based on company- or sometimes self-employed retired Naval officers, showed significant lack of manpower. Consequently, more and more Kriegsmarine staff were dispatched and integrated into the local organization. This was especially true in the Far East, where the German embassy in Tokyo became the most important administrative and logistical hub. After Japan entered the war in 1941, the German naval attaché established many branch offices and Kriegsmarine bases in Japan and Japanese-occupied territories in order to complete the various Sonderdienst tasks.

All in- and outbound shipping was mainly organized from the Kriegsmarine base in German-occupied Bordeaux (France). The French administration of the city as well as the surrounding department was loyal to the pro-German Vichy government of France which facilitated the top-secret Kriegsmarine overseas tasks.

In 1939, the Far East branch of the MSD organization comprised offices and service desks located at Tokyo, Yokohama, Kobe, Dalian (former Dairen), Bangkok, Shanghai, Yantai (former Chefoo), Tianjin and Manila. The later three were closed right after the outbreak of the European war. During the early months of the war, German vessels in neutral or friendly ports were put on hold. Raw materials exported from the Far East to Germany were mainly dispatched by train via the Trans-Siberian railroad, safe from any Allied attacks at that time. This vital supply route for approximately 200,000 tons of freight per year was closed in June 1941 following the German invasion of the Soviet Union. Afterward merchant ships, converted into blockade runners, remained the only possibility to forward raw materials from Asia to Germany and vice versa.

Based on the order of SKL and MSD in Germany, the German embassy naval attaché took control of all available German merchant ships in the Far East waters. This attaché also took charge of unemployed German civilians and idle seamen of the sunken German auxiliary cruisers *Thor*, *Michel*, the supply ship *Uckermark* and the mine layer *Doggerbank*. These people supported the Yokohama und Kōbe branches, while locating and establishing new offices as well. The newly set up offices and bases were located at George Town (Penang, opened April 1943), Singapore (renamed Shōnan, April 1943), Batavia (renamed Jakarta, April 1943) and Surabaya (June 1944).

Besides these main subsidiaries, there were dozens of facilities spread throughout Japan and Japanese-occupied territories for lodging, radio operation, medical treatment, staff recreation, warehousing, engineering and technology. These places were transferred to the Japanese at Hakone (opened October 1942), Akasaka (autumn 1942), Ashinoyu (April 1943), Ōkubo (1943), Kamakura (July 1944), Karuizawa, Arima, Rokkōzan (all 1945). Also, put into operation mainly in 1944, were Japanese-occupied Southeast Asia (named "Südraum"), such as Batu Ferringhi (Penang island), Penang Hill, Pasir Panjang (Singapore), Holland Hill (Malaya), Tandjong Priok, Tjikopo and Tretes (all Java island), and many more.


E.U.F.HÖRSTER
SOLINGEN

All of these places were put under the command of the German naval attaché in Tokyo: Vice-Admiral Wenneker and his staff, Captain Vermehren (CiC MSD Far East), Commander Bloomfield (supervising engineering officer of all Kriegsmarine branches in Japan), Commander Erhard (supervising officer [named "CiM—Chef in Malaya"] to all Kriegsmarine branches and installations in Japanese-occupied Malaya), Commander Kandeler (Java, named "CiS—Chef im Südraum"), and Knight's Cross recipient Commander Dommes (senior supervising officer to all Navy branches and installations in Japanese-occupied Southeast Asia).

After the auxiliary cruisers were lost in action and the operation of surface blockade runners became too dangerous for their crews, all military and logistic tasks were transferred to the submarine forces, among which were a few surrendered Italian long-range boats. German U-boat bases were at Penang, Shōnan, Jakarta, Surabaya in the Japanese-occupied Southeast Asia (named "Südraum"), and Kōbe in Japan proper.

Berthing in Japanese ports were an estimated 37 blockade runners, 4 warships, 19 U-boats and about 3,000 German residents, among them approximately 700 Kriegsmarine personnel. Statistics of the naval attaché office name 147 Kriegsmarine staff killed in action and about 600 missing. Many more ship units did not survive the 11,200 nautical-mile voyage from Germany to Japan and back and were sunk by Allied forces. From 1941 to 1945 about 260,000 tons of freight was shipped from Japan to Germany either by surface blockade runner or by U-boat (112,000 tonnes unloaded, 57% lost in transit by Allied action) while 58,000 tons were shipped from Germany to Japan (16% lost in transit).

Towards the end of the war in Japan, between Germany's defeat in May 1945 and the surrender of the Japanese Empire in September of the same year, and with the US internment at that time, the German Navy on behalf of the dissolved German embassy took over the administration of the German colony and the distribution of food stuff to all German nationals. Kriegsmarine staff in Southeast Asia were taken prisoner either by British forces in Penang and Singapore or Dutch forces in Java (DEI, where a few volunteered for the Indonesian liberation army). All German nationals (military personnel and civilians), were repatriated in spring 1947 at the latest except for those few subjects who furnished proof of residence in Japan before the Nazi party had seized power in Germany.

The relationship of the Japanese towards the Germans has been described as friendly and cooperative. Considering the very brief time of joint warfare the achievements were impressive, particularly concerning the shipping and U-boat activities, besides the technology transfer from Germany to Japan. This was accomplished in spite of language difficulties and shortage of maintenance supplies. Only after the war, under the impression of the incredible war atrocities by Axis forces in the European as well as Far East war theater, the Kriegsmarine veterans and their Japanese counterparts tried to play down their achievements to the furthest possible extent which almost led to a complete ignorance of the joint German-Japanese warfare of the Far East in historical memory.

Today, only few historical sites of the German-Japanese wartime cooperation have remained, among which the most impressive building is the former German HQ "Haus 1" in Penang, #36 Northam Road. Today it's #32 Jalan Ahmad Shah "The Mansion" in Malaysia. Its last commanding officer was Lieutenant Waldemar Grützmacher.


Grützmacher





In the lower part of the photo is a Japanese Naval Dagger

Deluxe Kriegsmarine Dagger





Deluxe Kriegsmarine Dagger

This rare Deluxe Kriegsmarine Officer dagger was produced by Weyersberg, Kirschbaum & Co. and exhibits custom enhancements throughout. As officers purchased their own daggers, Weyersberg, Kirschbaum & Co.—as did other major manufacturers—provided many extra cost options to make them unique or as presentation pieces.

The eagle pommel on this example shows much hand working to the wreath, eagle head and feathers not found on standard production daggers. The genuine ivory grip is also unique. The grip wire wrap consists of a two-twisted center wire between two single strand wires. As this required additional clearance, the ivory grip had to be specially turned to accept the greater width of the wrap. The wire is of gold-gilded silver. This is the first example that the authors have encountered with this option. Traditionally, a single strand of twisted wire was used.

The hand-chased scabbard is a custom option reflecting much handwork to achieve the oak leaf and acorn panel in relief. Enhancements also extend to the scabbard bands and carrying rings.

The "Perlon" portepée was one of the material variations used by manufacturers in later part of the war.



Kriegsmarine Dagger of Kapitänleutnant Walter Klemm







Kapitänleutnant Walter Klemm



Kriegsmarine Dagger of Kapitänleutnant Walter Klemm

Walter Klemm was born on December 19, 1909 in the Silesian city of Breslau, which is today Wrocław, Poland.

Klemm entered the Reichsmarine in 1934 together with his comrade Ernst von Bergen-Windels, who presented this dagger to Klemm. Compared to the Imperial period, presentation daggers were very rare during the Reichsmarine and Kriegsmarine period of the 1930s and 1940s. This dagger is quite obviously a gesture of a remarkable friendship.

In all navies of the world there are always important and famed units. U-boats for example catch the eyes of photographers, authors and screenwriters. Some other units attract much less attention, though essential to the execution of naval warfare. Minesweepers are that kind of unit. Often overlooked in war remembrances where the huge dreadnoughts, aircraft carriers and submarines are dominant, these small vessels are necessary for every kind of operations on open waters. Minesweeping is a dangerous and risky business that will not forgive any mistakes. Therefore their crewmen and officers are well-trained experts, going out in all conditions to clear the waters of enemy mines.

Walter Klemm decided in the mid-1930s to become a minesweeper. By 1938 he was a watch officer in the 2nd Minesweeper Fleet. During the early part of the war Klemm served in various minesweeping units, mostly in Atlantic and the Mediterranean theater of operations.

In early November 1941 he was promoted to Kapitänleutnant, while serving in the 8th minesweeping Flotilla headquarters. In 1942 he saw duty with the 3rd Sicherungskommando, a unit that operated out of Lorient, France, the largest German U-boat base on the French Atlantic coast. Their mission was to secure the outgoing routes for the German U-boats fighting the Battle of the Atlantic.

Klemm married Dagmar Mauritz in January 1941, and they had two children.

In July 1943 Klemm was promoted to Commander of the 6th Minesweeper Flotilla that operated in the Mediterranean and Adriatic Seas. He received the German Cross in Gold at January 10, 1945. He served there until the end of the hostilities. Captured by New Zealand troops, 6th Minesweeper Flotilla was deployed for minesweeping by the German Mine Sweeping Administration (GMSA) in the Adriatic Sea.

It is interesting to note that these GMSA units were to a certain degree, the nucleus of what later became the German Bundesmarine. Consistently we find Walter Klemm serving from 1958 until the end of October 1960 as commander of the 1st Minensuchgeschwader (minesweeping squadron) of the freshly founded Bundesmarine.

This is an edged weapon of a military expert who served in three German navies and saved many German and enemy lives with his important, but often underappreciated work.

The dagger is a standard issue 1938 pattern example. The unique feature is that this dagger was given to Klemm by his colleague Windels as evidenced from the engraving on the back of the scabbard and shown on page 542. This is unusual for the period.






WKC


E. Windels
S/L.
W. Klemm

Kriegsmarine Dagger of Admiral Erich Bey







Kriegsmarine Dagger of Admiral Erich Bey

Erich Bey, born March 23, 1898 in Hamburg, was a German admiral awarded the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross for his exemplary leadership in the Second World War.

Bey joined the German Imperial Navy in January 1916 as a volunteer and took part as a young cadet in the battle of Jutland on board SMS *Schleswig-Holstein*.

During the last year of the Great War he saw action on light, fast destroyers of the V. Torpedo boat Half Flotilla.

Following the end of the First World War, he stayed in the Navy and became an officer in the Freikorps Loewenfeld. The 3rd Marine-Brigade was raised by Wilfried von Loewenfeld in Kiel following the naval mutiny there. It was one of the first right-wing Freikorps units to be formed. It seized Breslau in support of the illegal coup d'etat attempt, the Kapp Putsch, and was disbanded after its failure. Most parts of the Freikorps were transferred to the Reichsmarine.

Bey served as watch officer on the schoolship RMS *Niobe* and commanded the torpedo boat *T-155* from September 1927 until October 1929. In 1934 he become commanding officer of the 1st Speedboat Half Flotilla. As a skilled officer he was later ordered to the Training Division of the High Command of the Kriegsmarine.

Bey continued his naval career during the rise of the Nazi Party in Germany. By the start of the Second World War he had achieved the rank of Fregattenkapitän.



Kapitän zur See Bey (right) with Generaloberst Dietl in Norway

Bey led the 4th Destroyer Flotilla, consisting of three destroyers, as part of Kommodore Friedrich Bonte's force that carried General Eduard Dietl's mountain troops for the occupation of Narvik during the German invasion of Norway on April 9, 1940. In the following battles of Narvik on April 10 and 13, Bey distinguished himself by leading the small group of destroyers in a brave though doomed action against a superior Royal Navy force that included the battleship HMS *Warspite*.

Bey was awarded with the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross on May 9, 1940. The next day he was promoted to Kapitän zur See and appointed commander of the German destroyer force (Führer der Zerstörer), succeeding Commodore Bonte, who had been killed on April 10 in the first battle of Narvik.

Bey



Bey then commanded the destroyer screen protecting the ships of the Brest Group (KMS *Scharnhorst*, *Gneisenau* and *Prinz Eugen*) during Operation *Cerberus* (the "Channel Dash") in February 1942. Of the three capital ships, *Scharnhorst* suffered extensive damage, having struck a mine off the Dover Straits.

Promoted to Konteradmiral (Rear Admiral) on Christmas Day December 25, 1943, Bey led a task force consisting of the battleship *Scharnhorst* and the destroyers *Z29*, *Z30*, *Z33*, *Z34* and *Z38* out of Alta Fjord in Operation *Ostfront*. The first and only surface sortie ordered by Grand Admiral Karl Dönitz, Bey's objective was to intercept the Allied Convoy JW 55B en route to Murmansk.



Bey's initial force of *Scharnhorst* and five destroyers was superior to the convoy's escorting British cruisers and destroyers in terms of firepower. However, Bey's flagship was outmatched by Admiral Bruce Fraser's battleship HMS *Duke of York* which led another Royal Navy fleet shadowing the convoy. Scharnhorst was expected to use her speed to avoid an engagement with *Duke of York*.

Poor weather, heavy seas and inadequate Luftwaffe reconnaissance, prevented Bey from initially locating the convoy so he dispatched his destroyers to fan out and assist in the search. However, the storm meant that Bey's destroyers ending up playing no part in the battle. Bey guessed correctly and *Scharnhorst* then managed to locate the convoy by herself.

In the first engagement of the ensuing battle of North Cape, while trading fire with the British convoy's screening cruisers, *Scharnhorst*'s main radar was destroyed rendering her blind in a range over 5.4 nautical miles. Additionally Bey broke the radio silence to inform his headquarters about the withdrawal of his destroyers due to the storm and bad weather conditions. Breaking the radio silence with a repeated message was a grave error by Bey because it was received also by the British and passed on to Admiral Bruce Fraser, the commander of the combat group attacking Bey. *Scharnhorst* was then caught by the more powerful HMS *Duke of York* and suffered critical damage.

"To our Führer! We will fight to the last grenade, Heil Hitler," was Bey's last radio message. Then the *Scharnhorst* disappeared into the Arctic Sea at about 7.45 p.m., being sunk by fifteen torpedo

hits from British cruisers. Of *Scharnhorst*'s crew of 1,968, Royal Navy destroyers fished 36 men alive from the icy sea, not one of them an officer.

Admiral Erich Bey was spotted swimming in the water by British sailors for a short time, but he was devoured by the sea.

Thirty sailors were rescued by HMS *Scorpion*. The survivors were treated honorably and with respect by their British captors. The *Scorpion*'s crew saluted them with three Hurrah's when they disembarked and boarded HMS *Duke of York*, Fraser's flagship. Fraser and his attending officers saluted the survivors, honoring in this gentlemanly way the fallen Germans. Fraser later mentioned the courage of the *Scharnhorst* crew when discussing the operation with his staff officers.

The dagger Erich Bey purchased in 1916 or 1917 is an interesting artifact. The ivory grip shows a seldom seen three-panel carving, which gives the dagger handle a slightly larger appearance.

The blade was forged in the "maiden hair" pattern by a skilled Damascus smith who worked for Weyersberg, Kirschbaum & Co.

The scabbard is of an interesting design consisting of a hammered surface that was subsequently enhanced with the lightning bolt design we see on most period daggers.

The dagger portepée is of silver bullion and was added by Bey during the Weimar period, most likely in the late 1920s. The hangers are also from the Weimar period, showing a Weimar inventory stamp.

The dagger was worn from 1918 until 1938 according to naval regulations that allowed former imperial officers to carry their daggers throughout their career. With the introduction of the 1938 pattern dagger, Bey decided to purchase a new dagger of the 1938 pattern for his service in the higher ranks of the Kriegsmarine.

Kriegsmarine Dagger of Oberleutnant Wolfgang Meckbach




Meckbach



Kriegsmarine Dagger of Oberleutnant Wolfgang Meckbach

This Kriegsmarine dagger belonged to Oberleutant Wolfgang Meckbach. His surname is engraved on the reverse upper scabbard. Personalizations of daggers from this period are relatively scarce. The dagger is a standard 1938 pattern Kriegsmarine dagger produced by the firm of Eickhorn. It shows extensive wear and patina from period use.

Wolfgang Wilhelm Richard Franz Joachim Meckbach was born on May 22, 1919 in the city of Frankfurt am Main, Germany. His middle-class background was influenced by his father's strong political support for the growing nationalist German ideology of the period, thus instilling a strong sense of patriotism in Wolfgang.

Meckbach was a very intelligent young man and was passionate about the inner working of ships from his youth. He joined the Kriegsmarine in October 1938 (Crew of '38 a.k.a. the "Deutschland Class"). Upon completion of his initial training and exams he was promoted to Seekadett (Cadet) in 1939.

His subsequent cadet training cruise took place aboard the battleship SMS *Schleswig-Holstein*. Unlike prior years, the cadet training cruise for the crew of '38 did not consist of visiting various ports of call in South America, Africa or the Caribbean. Instead, with the backdrop of increased tensions in Europe associated with Germany's territorial ambitions and military build-up, the *Schleswig-Holstein* cruised the Baltic Sea and made a "ceremonial" visit to the port city of Danzig.

On September 1, 1939 the ship with about 175 Cadets aboard was positioned off the Polish ammunition depot at Westerplatte. The *Schleswig-Holstein* opened fire on Westerplatte at 4:47 in the morning signaling the invasion of Poland by German ground forces. These were the first shots fired in the Second World War. Great Britain subsequently declared war with Germany on September 3 in keeping with her treaty with Poland. The *Schleswig-Holstein* continued to shell various enemy positions in support of the invading German troops until Polish capitulation on September 7, 1939. The ship with the cadets continued to support German military operations with the shelling of nearby Hel and Redlowo, Poland before returning to Kiel in October. On December 1, 1939 Meckbach was promoted to Fähnrich (Midshipman). Meckbach then attended the naval school in Flensburg for further training.

With the recent outbreak of war, the demand for trained personnel for the rapidly expanding U-Bootwaffe (U-boat force) was very high. It was important to have a large and capable submarine force to combat the superior surface fleet of Great Britain. Consequently, Meckbach volunteered for the U-Bootwaffe and was selected in 1940 to be trained as an engineer. After passing his exams Meckbach was given a naval commission and promoted to Leutnant on April 1, 1941.

Meckbach was assigned to the type VIIC submarine *U-372* as engineering officer, second in command to the captain. He served under the command of Kapitänleutnant Heinz-Joachim Neumann. The *U-372* operated in the Mediterranean Sea during 1941–42 and was assigned to the 29. Unterseebootsflotille based in La Spezia, Italy.

On June 15, 1942 *U-372* departed La Spezia on its seventh patrol of the shipping lanes of the eastern Mediterranean between Alexandria, Egypt and Tobruk.

By June's end 1942, the Allied campaign in North Africa was faltering and the advancing German armored forces of the Panzer Army Africa under the command of Generalfeldmarschall Erwin Rommel had Allied forces reeling. On June 20 Tobruk had fallen and the British 8th Army had retreated to El Alamein. With German forces only about 60 miles west of Alexandria, the principal British naval port in the eastern Mediterranean, the Commander in Chief of the British Mediterranean Fleet, Vice-Admiral Henry Harwood ordered to prepare for the destruction of the port facilities to prevent their utility if captured. All non-essential personnel and material were ordered to evacuate at once and establish new naval bases at Port Said, Haifa and Beirut, Lebanon.

On June 29, the British submarine tender HMS *Medway* accompanied by the Greek submarine tender SS *Corinthia* departed Alexandria for Haifa under escort by the British destroyers HMS *Sikh*, HMS *Zulu*, HMS *Hero*, HMS *Exmoor*, HMS *Aldenham*, HMS *Croome*, HMS *Tetcott* and the antiaircraft cruiser HMS *Dido*. The level of naval protection reflected the value placed on these


Meckbach
ORIGINAL


Keckbach

mission critical submarine support vessels by the Royal Navy. These submarine depot ships provided munitions, supplies, fuel, repair shops as well as dormitories for crews.

The following morning off Port Said, the *U-372* detected the British squadron by hydrophone. In a very daring attack, Kapitänleutnant Neumann penetrated the destroyer screen undetected and from the middle of the convoy fired a salvo of four torpedoes at the *Medway* at only 300–400 yards off her starboard beam. Two and possibly three of the four torpedoes hit their mark, at 9:25 am. The *Medway* immediately began taking on water and listing. *Medway* never stabilized and at 9:42 am slipped bow up beneath the waves.

HMS *Medway* was loaded with supplies and 1,123 men and women sailors. Spilling stores and munitions into the sea, 47 of the 90 spare British torpedoes were recovered. However, valuable supplies sank with her, greatly reducing the operational capability of the British 1st Submarine Flotilla. Miraculously, only 30 (some reports mention only 18) sailors were lost thanks to the number of destroyer escorts available to rescue survivors and the calm warm waters of the Mediterranean.

Kapitänleutnant Neumann quietly slipped away from the convoy with only the distant sound of off-target depth charge attacks. *U-372* then made port on July 12, 1942 in Salamis, a small island port off Athens, Greece for two weeks of resupply and rest rather than its home base at La Spezia, Italy.

Needless to say this tragic event of *Medway* resulted in controversy at the British Admiralty regarding the capability of the Royal Navy's anti-submarine warfare and its tactics. However, no court of inquiry was convened and ironically, the destroyer squadron was to exact revenge shortly thereafter.

On July 27, 1942, *U-372* departed Salamis for its eighth patrol, comprising operations in the eastern Mediterranean.

Since the beginning of the war, the British Coastal Command had continued to improve its tactics and technology for intercepting and destroying U-boats. The use of ASV (airborne surface vessel) radar allowed for the detection of U-boats on the surface by aircraft. However, even with this technology, successful attack of a U-boat at night was a low probability due to the limited precision of the radar and the reliance of visual contact to enable an attack with aerial depth charges.

On August 3, at 9:23 pm, a patrolling Vickers Wellington bomber of the RAF Coastal Command, No. 221 squadron stationed at RAF Abu Sueir, Egypt and equipped with ASV Mk .II radar obtained a contact southwest of Haifa, Palestine (now Israel). The Wellington crew had detected the *U-372*. The bomber undertook a depth charge attack as the U-boat crash dived but the sub was able to escape. The Wellington dropped a flare to mark the spot of the dive for further locating by nearby British destroyers.

The British Tribal Class destroyers HMS *Sikh* and *Zulu* were conducting anti-submarine patrols in the area in cooperation with the patrolling Wellington. The *Sikh* made contact with *U-372* at 2:45 am on August 4. Both of the British destroyers began intermittently dropping depth charges throughout the night and into the next morning in a hide-and-seek game with the *U-372*.

At about 10:30 am the HMS *Tetcott* and HMS *Croome* departed Haifa to relieve *Sikh* and *Zulu* who had by this time nearly expended their stores of depth charges. *Tetcott* made contact with the submarine at 12:47 pm. Both *Tetcott* and *Croome* dropped large pattern depth charges at 12:53 pm and 1:10 pm respectively. *U-372* still did not show any signs of succumbing to the continued bombardment. The *Tetcott* then maneuvered for a second attack. Kapitänleutnant Neumann, sensing another attack was imminent, sought protection in his own wake by circling. However, the destroyers were able to maintain contact and when the U-boat was about 100 to 120 feet off the *Tetcott*'s port quarter she deployed a second depth charge pattern at 1:20 pm; a nearly direct hit.

This final salvo was enough to force *U-372* to the surface and was subsequently spotted by the *Sikh* at about 1:30 pm. Kapitänleutnant Neumann immediately started his diesel engines in a last desperate attempt to escape his pursuers even though his vessel was trailing oil and had crushed ballast tanks resulting in poor trim. After *U-372* was able to escape to within 800 yards of the four British destroyers, every available gun was brought to bear on the U-boat scoring multiple hits. With the continued fusillade, Kapitänleutnant Neumann recognized he was out of options to save the *U-372* and her crew. Neumann directed Meckbach to set about scuttling the submarine. Upon waving a white flag from the conning tower, the crew began quickly abandoning the vessel. The U-boat sank quickly with barely enough time for all of her crew to abandon ship. She sank by the stern with the bow protruding 60 to 70 degrees from the sea and quickly disappeared from view in position 32.28N, 34.37E.

The commander of the HMS *Tetcott*, Captain Henry Richard Rycroft, ordered the cargo nets to be immediately deployed over the ship's freeboard and for the hands to assist the exhausted U-boat crew in climbing aboard. As a result, the entire 48-member complement aboard *U-372* was rescued including a Lebanese civilian wearing a money belt with $3,500 and about $650 in other currencies.

After initial interrogations of the U-boat crew, for which Captain Rycroft commented that the security-conscious crew offered little information, the destroyers returned to Haifa where the blindfolded submariners were led from the decks for further interrogation by CSDIC (Combined Services Detailed Interrogation Center) and SIME (Security Intelligence Middle East).

Rescued survivors aboard HMS Tetcott. Mechbach is on far left



Blindfolded crew of U-372 being taken as PoW





All photos courtesy of the HMS Tetcott Archives

The identity and purpose of the Lebanese civilian aboard the *U-372* was unknown until recently although it was safe to assume he was an agent for the German military intelligence service (Abwehr). Under the freedom of information act, recent declassified files indicate that his name was Jawad Hamadi, a student studying in Rome. German Intelligence gave him the codename "Hamlet." Hamadi was sympathetic to the German cause and was recruited by the Abwher organization in Rome and transferred to Athens. Hamadi was acting as a courier to deliver funds to Syria for payment to the high-profile spy Renato Levi (codenamed "Cheese"), a double agent working for British Intelligence.

The *U-372* had actually been on a classified mission when sunk. The reason the U-boat had returned to Salamis after its last patrol rather than returning to its homeport was to pick-up Hamadi and deliver him to Syria. Also clandestinely, the Royal Navy was actually hunting the *U-372* as soon as it left Salamis as British intelligence had decrypted coded messages from Abwehr. The British aircraft and destroyers actually been deployed to track and ambush the *U-372*.

Meckbach was held as a prisoner of the Allies in the area that later became Israel and also in Egypt. After unsuccessfully attempting to escape, he was transported by ship around the cape of southern Africa to the United States where the British transferred custody of him to the U.S. military. Meckbach was sent to a new facility in Phoenix, Arizona, named Camp Papago Park, where the most troublesome officers of the Ubootwaffe were interred in the desert. Camp Papago Park is also noteworthy in that on December 23, 1944 it was the location of the largest successful prisoner-of-war escape from an American facility.

While imprisoned, Meckbach took the opportunity to drive away boredom by furthering his education. For almost two years he took university-level correspondence courses in physics, mathematics, music and Spanish organized by the University of Chicago.

Upon his release from capture Meckbach returned to his hometown of Frankfurt am Main, Germany in May 1946. He continued his university studies at Goethe University and married Gabriela Mack. Gabriela was of Argentine decent and his linguistic skills in Spanish learned in prison proved to be of utility, particularly with his mother in law. He received his doctorate degree in physics in 1951. His postgraduate studies and specialty was in the field of microwaves.

With his familial connection to Argentina and the country's welcoming of German scientists and technicians, following graduation he emigrated and settled in Bahía Blanca where he was a physics assistant at Instituto Tecnológico del Sur. He was subsequently hired as a professor of the Faculty of Physical and Mathematical Sciences at the University of La Plata where he also continued his studies in applied microwave spectroscopy.

During this time, the Argentine government was particularly interested in the possible development of controlled nuclear fusion to secure an inexhaustible source of energy and bolster Perón's vision of the "New Argentina" as a world superpower. In 1954 Joseph Antonio Balseiro, head of the Physics Department of the Faculty of Exact and Natural Sciences of the University of Buenos Aires was impressed with Meckbach's scientific contributions. Balseiro invited Meckbach to conduct research and development in applied physics and nuclear engineering at the newly created Bariloche Atomic Center in San Carlos de Bariloche where Balseiro was appointed as its first director.

San Carlos de Bariloche, in the province of Rio Negro is located in a beautiful area of Patagonia in the Andean foothills and is architecturally reminiscent of an alpine Tyrolean village. Often referred to as "Little Switzerland" it is known for its mountain lakes, snow skiing, trekking and mountaineering. The city has been popular with German and Austrian immigrants since the 1910s with its pan-Germanic culture.

Meckbach was also very adept at teaching and administration and in August 1955 was one of the three original professors to establish the educational university Balseiro Insitute (formerly Institute of Physics of San Carlos de Bariloche), a project of the Bariloche Atomic Center. There, Meckbach developed curriculum in the field of experimental physics and continued his research in atomic collision physics using penetration of ions in matter. By the time of the graduation of the first class of the institute in May 1958, Meckbach was dedicating most of his energy to teaching at the institute and further developing its curriculum in physics and nuclear engineering. During his professional career, Dr. Wolfgang Meckbach became well recognized in global scientific circles as one of Argentina's most talented nuclear physicists.

Meckbach was an avid trekker, skier and musician. He was a very competitive skier and was an accomplished flautist. Wolfgang Meckbach died in his adopted hometown of San Carlos of Bariloche, Argentina on the afternoon of August 31, 1998 of a heart attack while he was preparing to go skiing at nearby Cerro Catedral. Coincidently and fittingly to honor his many scientific contributions his name was proposed for naming of an asteroid at the same time of his passing. His name was resoundingly accepted and today asteroid 7971 MECKBACH honors his fascinating life and his many contributions to experimental nuclear physics.

Luftwaffe (Air Force) Daggers





Luftwaffe Dagger of Herbert Hampe




Legion Condor
KRETA



Luftwaffe Dagger of Herbert Hampe

This 1937 pattern Luftwaffe dagger is a product of the Lauterjung Company (Tiger Stahlwaren- und Waffenfabrik, Solingen) and bears their distinctive Tiger trademark. Tiger did not produce many dress daggers and they are seldom encountered relative to other makers. The company did not produce their own fittings but used fittings supplied by other manufacturers.

The dagger was reportedly received by Herbert in 1941. The configuration of the dagger components is precisely what we would expect on a dagger that was produced in the period 1940–41.

The cross guard and pommel are of the generic types that were perfectly cast and required no hand finishing due to the excellent details. The grip is made of celluloid cast over a wooden core and therefore has retained the original white color that these daggers were intended to have. The grip is wrapped with a double twisted wire. The scabbard is also generic and has much of the gray finish remaining across the surface. The blade is in mint condition and original polish with nice cross-grain.

Bomber pilots are usually not famed like fighter pilots, though they had to fly for hours through storms, snow and enemy fire to reach their targets. Difficult navigation, lack of sleep and enemy attacks resulted in many not surviving the war.

Herbert Hampe flew for the Luftwaffe from February 1934 until the end of the war and saw action over nearly all battlefields. During the war he undertook 568 sorties and more than 60 in the Spanish Civil War. Born October 10, 1913 in Delitzsch, Saxonia as the son of the town mayor, he started private flying lessons in 1931 in the city of Leipzig. In February 1934 he entered the nucleus of what later became the Luftwaffe.

During the Spanish Civil War he flew for the Kampfgruppe 88 in the Legion Condor. His unit bombed the Catalonian city Guernica, an infamous act even in the perspective of those days because of the many civilian casualties.

He flew for the Kampfgeschwader 3 "Blitz" from the outbreak of the Second World War. He saw action over Poland and France where he destroyed five enemy airplanes on the airfield of Mormelon. During the battle of Crete he bombed the heavy British battleship HMS *York*. One of his comrades was Walter Lehweß-Litzmann, another recipient of the Knight's Cross, who after the war served in the National People's Army of the German Democratic Republic and worked for the East German airline Interflug.

With the invasion of Soviet Russia Hampe flew many attacks against the enemy on the Eastern Front. He destroyed six trains near Smolensk and attacked enemy troops and tanks. In Russia he received the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross for battlefield bravery on May 5, 1944.

In August 1944 he was transferred to Kampfgeschwader 6, a unit where highly decorated and accomplished pilots were massed. He was trained on the famous Me 262 and flew nearly 50 missions in this type.

Released from an American prisoner-of-war camp in the fall of 1945, he went back to Delitzsch and in the mid-1950s he moved to Dortmund where he flew for the Rheinmetall Company as a professional pilot.

He died in Dortmund on September 13, 1999.





Hampe on a propaganda postcard

Daggers of the German Democratic Republic



Honor Daggers of the National People's Army and Ministry of State Security of the German Democratic Republic

by Roman Korinth

After a decision in 1957 by the Ministry of National Defense, officers, generals and admirals were to be equipped with an honor dagger. The Thuringian weapon manufacture, later "Jagd- und Schneidwaren Fabrik" in the city of Mühlhausen, developed the honor dagger or "Ehrendolch" in four model variants at the end of 1960.The official introduction of the Ehrendolch for wear took place on May 1, 1962.

The metal parts such as the grip-ring, cross guard, pommel, buffer plate and scabbard fittings are silver and chrome colored, on daggers for officers of the land forces, air defense, border troops and officers of the Ministry of State Security (MfS). The pommel on these daggers has a hammered surface.

The National People's Army (NVA) officer daggers have serial numbers starting with 50000 for the years 1961–62. Hangers with three holes for the buckle were initially issued. Also, the small Mühlhausen manufacturer mark is found on the obverse of the blade ricasso. There are daggers known with numbers that range between 30000 to over 800000. These are not actual serial numbers on these daggers, most likely for reasons of secrecy.

Officer daggers for members of the Ministry for State Security had a 4-digit number, starting with 1xxx, 2xxx or 3xxx as well as the small Mühlhausen manufacturer mark on the blade. The hangers were identical to those worn by NVA officers.

The officer daggers of the Volksmarine were gold-washed or polished brass. The first naval officer daggers had a galvanic gilding which was quickly changed, probably for cost reduction, into a brass variant as well as a large Mühlhausen manufacturer mark on the blade. The numbering began with 20000 and ended between 30000 and 31000. The first People's Navy daggers were issued with three-hole hangers, dark blue lining and a gold-colored obverse.

Officer daggers for all branches of the armed forces were delivered in a cardboard box and were available in different colors. On the cardboard boxes of the early officer daggers, only the dagger number was noted. Later, daggers had the number and the service branch marked on the box's smaller side, with the exception of daggers for MfS officers which had just the number on the box.

Daggers for Generals and Admirals of the NVA

From 1961/62 period until the last award on October 7, 1989, there were three different surface finishes for general and admiral daggers. The fourth and final design was a brass variant. All the general and admiral daggers were galvanized gold until about 1980.

The first generation of general and admiral daggers had a satin gilding of higher quality. These early daggers are desired by most collectors. They had a five-digit number beginning with 10001 and a small Mühlhausen mark. They also came with brocade hangers having three holes for the buckle.

They were delivered according to the NVA branch in the following colors:

- Red for land forces and the MfS
- Dark blue for navy
- Light blue for air force / air defense
- Green for the border groups

The highest known number of this sequence is at 100xx. Following, five-digit numbers are found with the early gold finishing of the general and admiral dagger beginning with 0000x and the small Mühlhausen maker mark. Daggers of this first generation were awarded in a red, artificial leather-covered case. These cases were lined with dark blue artificial silk.

The second generation were finished with copper-containing gold from Russian production, which left a reddish glow on the gilded parts of the dagger. The number sequence began here with 00100 and ended approximately to the number 00650. The transition in production from red to the later yellow gold plating most likely overlapped. Daggers of this second generation had brocade hangers with buckles in an according color. They came in an artificial red leather box, lined with dark blue artificial silk.

The third generation had bright yellow gilding and therefore are easy to distinguish. The number sequence begins about 00650 and goes up to ca. 00870. On the blade the Mühlhausen manufacturer mark was stamped. Also here there may be overlap with the previous generation of general and admiral daggers. This third variant had brocade hangers awarded in a case covered with artificial leather. Inside, these cases were lined with blue or a bright, reddish artificial silk.

The fourth and final generation was a pure brass variant. From probably the number 00870 until the last verifiable number 01288, (Generalmajor L. Wellschmied, awarded on October 7, 1989, the last awarding in the GDR), only brass versions are known for general and admiral daggers. "Dederon" (a GDR brand name for polyamide fibers) brocade hangers were issued for a short time. Afterward, standard hangers, also made of "Dederon," in the according military branch color were issued. This last generation had no Mühlhausen manufacturer mark on the blade. These daggers were awarded in a red artificial leather case. These cases were lined inside with a blue or light red artificial silk.

Ministry of State Security Presentation Daggers for Merit or Retirement

There probably were some presentation daggers in the form of officer and general daggers issued in a red box, covered with artificial leather. These cases were lined with blue artificial silk.

The first known daggers appeared in the 1960s and were for retiring generals. They were adorned with the following etched words:

In Anerkennung für hervorragene Leistungen (In recognition for outstanding achievements)

The most interesting and well-documented dagger is probably the dagger of Generalmajor Szinda. This dagger was presented personally at a celebration by the Minister of State Security Erich Mielke on November 30, 1965. It has a reddish gold plating, no numbering but a Mühlhausen manufacturer mark. The dagger was presented with red brocade hangers.

Further variations of these presentation daggers with blade etching are found as officer daggers and general daggers in the brass variant. All these daggers were issued in a red box.

Another known variant of this MfS presentation dagger is a general dagger with a 24-carat gilding and a blade engraved with the wording:

Überreicht vom Minister für Staatssicherheit (Presented by the Minister of State Security)

These daggers were presented personally by the Minister in celebration of a promotion; e.g. Generalleutnant Kratsch in 1985; or for retirement from active service.

These 24-carat, gold-plated daggers had a four-digit number starting with 0, brocade hangers and were issued in a red artificial leather case. These cases were lined with burgundy colored velour.

There were approximately 485 promotions to the rank of general or admiral; 95 of whom were promoted to general at the Ministry of State Security. From this it can be estimated how many genuine general and admiral daggers existed.

GDR General Honor Dagger of Generalleutnant Gerhard Seifert





GDR General Honor Dagger of Generalleutnant Gerhard Seifert

Gerhard Seifert was born in Mühlau near Mittweida, Germany on January 6, 1932.

From 1946 until 1952 he was a car mechanic. He entered the military service February 2, 1953 as Fähnrich at the officers' school in Erfurt. In 1955 he joined the SED, the Socialistic Unity Party of Germany. He undertook further training at the infantry and tank schools as well as study at the Military Academy in Dresden until 1963. From 1964 until 1976 he served in various units as officer for equipment and armament. In 1976 he became head of the Tank Commando of the land forces followed by deputy head of the equipment and armament of the GDR land forces from 1983 until 1989.

He was promoted to Generalleutnant March 1, 1989 and served from 1989 until 1990 as head of the Military District Command in Potsdam, near Berlin.

As an officer he received his honor dagger for land forces officers, and after his promotion to Generalleutnant, his general dagger.



Seifert receiving his promotion to Generalmajor by leader of the state Erich Honecker




VATERLÄNDISCHER VERDIENSTO
IN



Mühlhausen manufacturing mark


C1194


51404
Landstreitkräf
51404

GDR Luftwaffe General Dagger of Klaus Henkes





GDR Luftwaffe General Dagger of Klaus Henkes

Klaus Henkes was born in Görlitz, Lower Silesia on July 29, 1929.

He fought as young man during the last battles of the Nazi Reich and became a Soviet prisoner of war from 1946 until 1949. He worked as a coal miner near Leipzig and became a member of East Germany's ruling Socialist Unity Party of Germany. By 1949 he had already reached the ranks of Brigadier with SAG Wismut, the important uranium mine in Germany. The Soviets were in need of uranium for their nuclear weapon program.

He volunteered for military training on May 23, 1952 and was commanded to attend "Lehrgang X" training until 1953. This was a special training program for future military pilots for the GDR's future air force, established by the Soviets.

After completing his training he was assigned to the provisional Flying School near Bautzen, which later became the Officers' Training Base for Military Pilots. After his training there he was then sent for a lengthy period of training, which lasted until 1959, at the Gagarin Air Force Academy near Moscow.

From 1959 untill 1961 Henkes served as a senior pilot with Air Force Command. Then, from 1961 until 1975, he was deputy Chief of Staff for Flight Safety, Command Posts and Automation, still with Air Force Command, based at Barnim military complex at Strausberg.

On March 1, 1975 he was promoted to the rank of Major General. This was also the year in which he was succeeded as deputy Chief of Staff by Günter Hiemann and appointed a member of the government as Deputy Minister of Transport and Head of the Civil Aviation department in succession to Paul Wilpert.

In 1978 Henkes succeeded Kurt Diedrich in the top job at Interflug, the German Democratic Republic's "flag-carrier" airline. The appointment to this position of a military general highlighted the close links between Interflug and the defence forces in East Germany. He remained at Interflug till 1982. On October 2, 1982 he was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant General.

In 1989 he was awarded the National Prize of East Germany. He retired April 30, 1990. Henkes died March 7, 2003.




1293
H



Presentation Dagger from the Minister of State Security to General Kratsch


überreicht vom Minister
für Staatssicherheit



GDR Dagger of Generalleutnant Günther Kratsch

Günther Kratsch was born October 21, 1930. He attended the Volksschule from 1937 to 1945 and began training as a salesman. After working briefly in this profession, Kratsch joined the SED party in 1950. A year later he begun a career in the Ministry of State Security. He attended his basic training in Altenburg. Upon completion Kratsch was transferred to the headquarter of the Ministry of State Security in Berlin. There he served in Abteilung II, which was responsible for the "Westarbeit," espionage in Western societies.

In 1960, Kratsch was appointed head of Abteilung II. In addition to his work as a department head, Kratsch studied at the University of the Ministry of State Security and graduated as a lawyer in 1965.

He attained the position of deputy chief of the Hauptabteilung II in 1973. Three years later he became the head of the Hauptabteilung II. In 1977, Kratsch was promoted to the University of the Ministry of State Security together with four other officers. In the 1980s, Kratsch was responsible for all counterespionage matters in the former Ministry of State Security. In 1985, Kratsch was promoted to Generalleutnant. Kratsch was relieved of his leadership function in the Hauptabteilung II in December 1989, shortly after the fall of the Berlin Wall. In January 1990 his dismissal took place. Kratsch died May 9, 2006.




0392



Dagger of Generalmajor Gustav Szinda


In Anerkennung
für hervorragende Leistungen



Dagger of Generalmajor Gustav Szinda

Gustav Szinda was born on February 13, 1897 in Blindgallen, East Prussia. After school he became a locksmith.

During the First World War he served as a soldier. From 1918 he worked again as a locksmith. In the same year, he joined the Independent Social Democratic Party of Germany (USPD).

In 1920 he moved to Gelsenkirchen, where he worked in his profession. In the period from 1920 to 1924 he participated in the fighting in the Ruhr area. He joined the Communist Party of Germany (KPD) in 1924, and a year later, also worked as a functionary in the Red Front Fighter Federation (RFB).

After the National Socialists took power in 1933, Szinda worked illegally as an instructor and secretary of the party. He finally immigrated to Amsterdam in 1935, interestingly guided by a relative of one of the authors. In the following years he became chief of staff and later commander of the XI International Brigade in the Spanish Civil War. From 1937 he headed the counterespionage of the Interbrigades. A year later he worked in the Central Committee (CC) of the Communist Party of Spain.

Even before Germany's attack on the Soviet Union, Gustav Szinda moved to Moscow and became a member of the Comintern (Communist International). He attended the Central-Commitee school and participated in the fighting of Soviet partisans against German Nazi troops in the Pripjet area.

In December 1943 he parachuted into Berlin and avoided any contact with the Communist resistance. Instead, he hid himself before the Red Army finally retrieved him in the spring of 1945. After a short time in prison he went to the Soviet Union to work as a teacher at the Antifa School in Moscow.

At the end of December 1945, he returned to Germany with a special party commission. As early as January 1946 he began to work in the Soviet Zone of Occupation (SBZ) at the police department in East Berlin. Beginning August 1946 he became head of the personnel department of the National Police in Mecklenburg followed by Director in 1948/49 of the personnel department of the regional government of Mecklenburg. A short time later he worked as a department manager for police cases of the party headquarters for the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party Germany (SED).

In 1951, he became Head of the Department for Foreign Affairs of the German Democratic Republic (GDR), which was transferred to the Ministry of National Security (MfS) as a foreign intelligence division. In 1954 he took over the management of Hauptabteilung VII of the MfS, which was responsible for counterespionage of the Ministry of the Interior (MdI) and the German People's Police (DVP).

From 1958, until his retirement in 1965, he served as head of the district administration for state security in Neubrandenburg, most recently in the rank of Generalmajor. He was at the same time also a member of the SED district authority.

Szinda has received numerous awards; among others, in 1957 the Order of Karl Marx (KMO), in 1972 the Fatherland Order of Merit (VVO) in gold and, in the year before his death, the Grand Star of People's Friendship in Gold.

On September 23, 1988 Gustav Szinda died.


In Anerkennung
für hervorragende Leistungen





Mühlhausen manufacturer mark


In Anerkennung
für hervorragende Leistungen

Border Patrol Dagger of General Jürgen Reinholz











Border Patrol Dagger of General Jürgen Reinholz

Jürgen Reinholz was born in the city of Küstrin on March 5, 1940. He entered the military forces of the GDR in February 1958 and served until 1961 as NCO. In 1959 he entered the Socialist Unity Party of Germany. From 1961 until 1964 he was at the officers' school in Frankenberg and officers' school for the border troops. He served as platoon leader in the Border Regiment 44 "Walter Junker" in Babelsberg near Berlin until 1971. From 1971 until 1974 he studied at the military academy in Dresden, Saxony. From there he was transferred to the city of Plauen as a teacher for border patrol troops and other military schools where he served until 1989, at least as commanding officer of the border patrol school for NCOs IV "Paul Fröhlich."

He was promoted to Generalmajor on October 7, 1989, shortly before the Berlin Wall fell, and became second commander of the Grenztruppen until the end of the GDR. He died on June 24, 2000.


0945



GDR border patrol near Braunlage, December 1982



Wehrgeschichtliches Museum im Schloss Rastatt

Military history in Baden-Württemberg

The Rastatt History Museum, with a number of collections and a modern, didactically prepared exhibition, is one of the leading museums of military history in Germany. Founded in 1934, it was later housed in Rastatt Castle in 1956.

While the museum primarily presents the everyday life of soldiers and military developments, it also highlights the experiences of large-scale, industrialized warfare. The collections are designed to broaden the knowledge of the visitor. They showcase rank insignia, historic edged weaponry and military music.

One of the primary goals of the collection is to familiarize the broader public with the characteristics of historical edged weapons. In addition to introductory texts and explanation regarding their construction and the art of the edged weapon, some 280 original objects are displayed in attractively designed display cases.

Special features include a large diorama with more than 6,000 pewter figures of the battle of Slankamen (1691), a large model of the Rastatt fortress around 1860 and a collection of artillery gun models from between 1820 and 1860. The First World War exhibition includes interactive displays especially designed to help young people familiarize themselves with the subject.

Further information: www.wgm-rastatt.de







"Whatever the mind is set upon, or whatever it keeps most in view, that it is bringing to it, and the continual thought or imagining must at last take form and shape in the world of seen and tangible things."

—Prentice Mulford, *Your Forces and How to Use Them*, 1887

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publishers

MILITARY HISTORY

ISBN 978-1-61200-777-9

US $200.00
UK £150.00

9 781612 007779

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